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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Help Prevent Gangs in Tippecanoe County



Published by the 18WFLI.com on December 3, 2009.

TIPPECANOE COUNTY, IN | North-central Indiana is living on borrowed time when it comes to gang activity. If proper steps aren't taken, the number of gangs and gang members will sky-rocket. Tippecanoe County District Attorney Pat Harrington said gang numbers continue to increase in popularity in area schools. "In the period of May through July we had seven shots fired. If they had been accurate in shooting, we would have had seven homicides. All related to gangs, drugs and guns," said Harrington.

Harrington is "Training the Trainers," showing principals how to tell if students in their schools are affiliated with gangs. The idea is for the message to then go to teachers, to parents, to fellow students. There are the five gangs the county said have the biggest presence on area streets. Some gang signs are easy to pick out, like tattoos. Others are more difficult, like gang colors. They blend in with local school colors: blue and white, black and red - even Boilermaker colors, black and gold.

Harrington says gang activity is nothing new to Tippecanoe County, but the growing popularity is. That was news to Wainwright Middle School Principal Neal McCutcheon. "Kind of paints the picture of what's happening in Tippecanoe County and makes me more aware of what may be happening in the southeast corner and what is going on with my neighboring schools," said McCutcheon. McCutcheon says the time for complacency is over. "If you don't see it and if you do not feel it, you are not impacted by it. But it is here, and we need to open our eyes and take a hard look at what we are doing," said McCutcheon.



Harrington and his staff said you the biggest thing teachers, administrators, students and parents can do is call the anonymous We-Tip Hotline if they see any suspicious gang activity. As Harrington said: if something doesn't get done now, the problem will only get worse.

Tippecanoe County Project Safe Neighborhoods released an YouTube video to educate the community. The video on YouTube is called "Help Prevent Gangs-Know the Facts". To see other information on the Tippecanoe County PSN, please visit <http://www.tippecanoe.in.gov/PSN/division.asp?fDD=45-319>.

Hammond Man Faces Charges For Gang Killing

Published by the Post-Trib.com on November 18,2009.

HAMMOND, IN| The Lake County Prosecutor on Tuesday charged an alleged gang member with murder in the shooting death of an East Chicago man outside a Hammond convenience store Sunday night. Antonio Ruiz Jr., 19, of Hammond, faces felony charges in the death of Robert Daniel Martinez, 18, according to Lake Superior Court documents.



Martinez died of a gunshot wound to the back while riding away from Star Liquors, 1201 Chicago St. Ruiz is charged with murder, two counts of attempted battery and two counts of criminal recklessness. According to a probable cause affidavit, Ruiz, named by witnesses as a member of the Latin Kings, and other gang members were involved in a confrontation with rival gang members at the store. Martinez left the store with a companion in a car and Ruiz shot through the back passenger side window of the car, striking Martinez, seated in the front seat, in the shoulder. The female passenger flagged down police in the 700 block of Michigan Street. Martinez was taken by the Hammond Fire Department to St. Margaret Mercy Healthcare Center North Campus. He was later taken to Advocate Christ Medical Center in Chicago where he later died, the affidavit said. Ruiz was taken to the Lake County Jail.

Regional ★

Gangs Crux of City's Graffiti Problem: Police Say Gangs Communicate Through Markings

Published by TheIndyChannel.com on October 30, 2009.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN | -- Indianapolis police blame gangs for the influx of graffiti in parts of the city, leading officials to ask residents to be proactive in reporting and fighting the markings. In a two-block stretch of Illinois Street downtown, graffiti marks several buildings, 6News' Ericka Flye reported. "Graffiti on walls, graffiti on buildings -- it simply isn't family-friendly," said resident Cortez Smith. "Most people don't want to cross by that, regardless of the neighborhood."

As law enforcement officers grapple with the growing problem, they have begun an educational effort they hope will make the public more knowledgeable and more eager to do something about it. Lt. Marshall Depew said most of the graffiti is either related to nearly 330 active gangs in the city or scrawled for sake of "art." "It either marks or claims territory, issues a threat or a challenge to a rival gang, or it might memorialize a fallen gang member," Depew said.

At a forum on gang trends and practices held at Arlington High School Tuesday night, the Peace in the Streets organization and police hoped to spread an anti-graffiti message. Depew said it's important to clean graffiti off walls as quickly as possible to cut off communication between gangs that could lead to criminal activity. "Instead of letting that sit, being proactive and removing that graffiti would be our biggest recommendation," Depew said. Although property owners are responsible for cleaning graffiti off private property, Depew said finding an absentee landlord or owner of a vacant property isn't easy. Street crews from the Department of Public Works are responsible for cleaning graffiti off private property. People who are on probation are also used to do that work. Before graffiti is cleaned, property owners are asked to take pictures of it so that a law enforcement officer might decipher the message.

Reputed Gang Member Charged in Death of Federal Informant

Published by the Chicago Tribune.com on December 2, 2009.

CHICAGO, IL | A reputed Vice Lords street gang member was charged Tuesday with killing a federal informant in 2006. Spencer Martin, 32, was ordered held without bail on a murder charge for shooting Earl Willis, 26, and leaving him for dead in a van on Chicago's South Side, authorities said.

Chicago police said Martin, who had become a target of a federal probe, carried out the killing after learning that Willis was an informant. According to sources, Willis was an informant for the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives at the time of his death. Willis was last seen alive in February 2006 with Martin at a North Side gas station, authorities said. Martin allegedly shot someone during an attempted robbery at the gas station, according to Cook County Assistant State's Attorney Joe Lattanzio.

Local and federal authorities began investigating Martin almost immediately after Willis' badly decomposed body was discovered in his van in May 2006. Martin was jailed on an unrelated charge a short time later. With Martin behind bars, detectives waited on physical evidence, including DNA and ballistics, authorities said.

Gang Member Faces Mandatory Prison Under New 'Valadez' Law

Published by ChicagoBreakingNews.com on December 6, 2009

CHICAGO, IL | A reputed gang member from the South Side has become the first person charged under a new state law that toughens penalties for gang members caught with loaded weapons.

Kirk Craan, 18, of the 1300 block of East 89th Street, was charged under the law recently signed by Gov. Pat Quinn that requires prison time for gang members convicted of possessing a loaded gun in a public area, Chicago police said.

The new law signed just last week was named after Officer Alejandro "Alex" Valadez, who was killed while on duty six months ago. Two of Valadez's alleged killers were reputed gang members on probation, police said.

Police arrested Craan at about 1 p.m. Saturday near the 9200 block of South Blackstone Avenue after he exited an alley and ran from officers. Officers recovered a handgun and ammunition from Craan during a pat-down, police said in a news release.

Craan, who has a pending criminal case on armed robbery, vehicular hijacking and unlawful restraint charges, was charged with unlawful use of a weapon, possession of a firearm with a defaced serial number, and possession of ammunition without a valid firearms owner identification card.



Kirk Craan (Handout)

Gang Leader Preyed on ...The Children of Aurora

Published by ChicagoBreakingNews.com October 15, 2009.

WORTH TOWNSHIP, IL| The last defendant to be sentenced in the sweeping federal case against the Insane Deuces street gang of Aurora was sentenced Thursday to the maximum 20 years in prison after a prosecutor described him as an enforcer who "sent children out to kill other children."

Romel Handley, 25, often shook his head at the defense table as Assistant U.S. Atty. Patrick Pope described him as the leader of the gang's army of "shorties," or younger members who were recruited to commit shootings for the gang in its war against the Latin Kings. The gang's guiding principal was murdering its opponents, Pope said, and Handley was part of it. Witnesses in the case accused Handley of personally taking part in nine attempted murders on the gang's behalf. "They preyed on and killed the people and the children of Aurora," Pope said.



At the height of the gang's activities, the suburb might see 25 murders a year, Pope said. After the investigation, led by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the suburb endured only two homicides in 2008. In all, 15 others were charged with Handley in a racketeering conspiracy in 2003 and blamed for multiple murders in the town. The case resulted in life sentences for several gang members.

Handley's attorney, Beau Brindley, argued his client joined the gang out of fear as a 14-year-old and made an attempt earlier this decade to draw back his participation in gang life. That put a target on Handley's back known as a "smash-on-sight" order from the gang, making him the least culpable defendant in the case, Brindley said. When he had a chance to address the court, Handley asked for forgiveness and said he had learned his lesson, calling himself "young and dumb." "I gained nothing from gang life, and I have lost everything except my life," he said as he stood in the courtroom in an orange prison jumpsuit with his hair in cornrows.

U.S. District Judge Harry Leinenweber agreed it's a tragedy when young teens are pulled into gangs at an early age, but he said he believed Handley was a full member of the Insane Deuces conspiracy. A maximum sentence would be just punishment, he said. After the sentence was handed down, Handley looked toward supporters in the courtroom and mouthed a message: "I'll be back. Don't worry about it."

Gangs exist in Worth Township

Published by the Southtown Star November 27, 2009

WORTH TOWNSHIP, IL| Gang activity is not a significant problem in Worth Township but street gangs do maintain a presence in some parts of the township, according to a member of the Cook County sheriff's gang crimes unit. Street gangs congregate in sections of Alsip, Blue Island and Burbank, Sheriff's Investigator Jeff Ramos told the audience at a recent town hall meeting at the township.

Gangs with deep roots in Chicago migrated to the Southland in recent years after housing projects were torn down. Street gangs also took advantage of the suburban landscape by committing crimes in one community and moving to other towns before being caught. The sheriff's gang crimes unit has undermined that strategy by investigating gang activity throughout the county and working with local police departments, he said. "Gangs that are floating from town to town. We know who they are," Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart said at the town hall meeting, which was held at Shepard High School in Palos Heights. Specifically, members of the Satan Disciples maintain a presence in Alsip near 115th Street between Joalyce and Knox drives. They also are known to gather near the intersection of 123rd Street and Maple Avenue in Blue Island, Ramos said. Meanwhile, members of the Latin Kings often can be found in Blue Island on 135th Street near Greenwood Avenue and Broadway Street. They also maintain a presence near Hoyne and Oak streets, an area often referred to as "H-block," Ramos said.

Finally, Ramos said, members of Ambrose often congregate in Burbank near 79th Street and Lavergne and Nagle avenues. They also gather in Blue Island near 121st and Gregory streets, he said. Gangs often choose a place to congregate based on where a member lives, Ramos said. "Usually, someone lives close by. They have to claim something as their spot," he said. Ramos advised residents to pay particular attention to activities that occur near gang territory. For example, a high amount of automobile or pedestrian traffic likely means that drug trafficking is taking place. "We can't fight these guys alone," Ramos said. "We need you to call 911."



Gangs Use Cell Phones and Social Media to Coordinate Crimes

Published by the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on November 22, 2009



ONTARIO, Calif. — These days social networking sites and cell phones are not just a place to catch up with friends. Gangs in Southern California are using them to orchestrate crime, commit fraud and traffic drugs. The issue is so severe at California Institution for Men in Chino, that Lt. Thomas Goetz said he has assigned two staff members to try to eliminate the use of pre-paid disposable phones in the prison. "The cell phones have become a communication tool between inside and outside gang members that we can't circumvent," he said.

Issues like this were discussed on Thursday by a panel of law enforcement experts at an Assembly Select Committee hearing held at the Ontario Police Department. The hearing was organized by Assembly Majority Leader Alberto Torrico, D-Fremont, and was joined by Assemblywoman Norma Torres, D-Ontario. The severity of the problem has prompted Torrico and Assemblyman Curt Hagman, R-Chino Hills, who was also in attendance, to consider co-authoring a bill that would make it a criminal offense to have or sell a phone in a prison. Currently there is no such legislation. Also, FCC prohibits the state from putting in scramblers to stop the use of phones in prisons, Goetz said.

The main problem for prisons is that there is no way to trace the information that is being relayed in the phone calls, unlike land lines which can be monitored, he said. It's getting to the point that gangs are circumventing all our investigations because of these media outlets," said John Santos, special agent with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Special Services Unit.

And the only consequence to inmates is having 30 days added to their sentence, and that's only if the cell phone is connected to a crime, he said. In many cases, those 30 days would be wiped out for good behavior, Goetz said. In 2007 there were only a handful of throw-away phones confiscated at CIM and only 30 in 2008, Goetz said. But prison officials have already taken away 147 cell phones this year, he said.

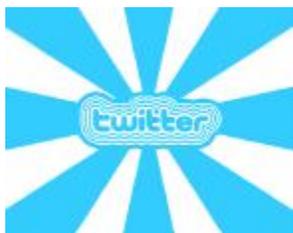


A standard cell phone could be sold at the prison for \$300, but one with texting or picture-taking capabilities could sell for \$500, he said. "We trying to find out who's bringing them in and where they are coming from," Goetz said. Some prepaid phones have come in via visitors, others through the mail, and there are cases of staff inside the prison selling them to inmates. "We have an enormous problem in state prisons, and it is starting to create a huge workload for us," Goetz said.

But using phones isn't the only method, gang members are also turning to social media networks to recruit members. They are also using their sites to openly talk about crimes they have committed, Hunter said. Skipp Townsend, an interventionist, has been involved in the culture of gang violence for years and has noticed the recent trend of technology in gangs. Youth in the East Coast are finding gang members through social

networking sites and getting in contact with them, he said. "These are groups of children with no guidance. They are reaching out to The Crips, and they want to create a hierarchy and they are doing it via the Internet," he said.

However, governments are not just sitting back. Agencies like Ontario Police Department have found ways to use sites like YouTube to their advantage, said Detective Gabriel Gutierrez, who is assigned to the Gang Suppression Unit. A suspect on trial tried to convince a jury that he was not affiliated with any gang, he said. The Police Department was able to show the jury a video posted on YouTube of the individual with the gang, and he was convicted, Gutierrez said.



But you can't solve the issues of gangs by locking them up, said Jerry Hunter, assistant chief of the state Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement. In order to adequate combat gangs, there needs to collaboration between politicians and law enforcement as well as community leaders and parents, Hunter said. "If unchecked, gangs are capable of gripping entire communities with fear, violence, drugs, graffiti, and other crimes," said Torres. "When communities are crushed under the weight of these crimes, we cannot sit back and let it happen. Our top priority should be to provide clean, safe environments for our children to grow and our families to live in."

Gangs in New York Talk Twitter: Use Tweets to Trash-Talk Rivals, Plan Fights

Published by the NYDailyNews.com on November 29, 2009.

NEW YORK, NY | The city's street gangs are becoming tweet gangs. Manhattan's young thugs have turned to [Twitter](#), and the cops who track them are fast behind, the Daily News has learned.

It's old-school crime meets new technology: attacks being plotted - and thwarted - 140 characters at a time. One investigator recently warned parents and teens that the bastion of OMG and LOL has been infiltrated by violent crews waging turf wars. A boy shot in the leg weeks earlier on Lenox Ave. may have been targeted because of a battle the Original Young Gangsters crew started on Twitter. "It's horrible," NYPD Lt. Kevin O'Connor of Manhattan North's gang intelligence unit told a forum in Harlem. A basic search of the social-networking site for OYG or [Jeff Mob](#), the gang based in the Jefferson Houses in East Harlem, yields shout-outs and throw-downs. "I knoe bitches from oyg that would dead mob yah s--t in harlem," one girl wrote in a series of tweets aimed at drawing out a rival for a fight.



Investigators are monitoring the traffic in hopes of sweeping up gangbangers before the bloodshed - and searching Twitter after attacks for clues. "It is another tool ... just like old phone records," a police source said. "We can go through them [messages] to track these guys."

Harlem pastor Vernon Williams, who runs Perfect Peace Ministry Youth Outreach, said his staff uses Twitter, MySpace and instant messaging to keep track of 4,000 at-risk teens. A week ago, Twitter helped the volunteers stop a street war after they saw the Get Money Boys, based in the St. Nicholas Houses on W. 127 St., exchanging threats with Goodfellas and The New Dons, based just a few blocks north. "They were threatening to go and hurt

two people," said Williams, 51, who sent staff out to find the tweeters. An NYPD spokesman and the Manhattan district attorney's office declined comment on the phenomenon, and Twitter did not respond to e-mails.

Gang members who grew up in the digital age are blasé about their tweeting. One 15-year-old in the 28 Gunnaz gang said it's just like any other "form of communication," except that the world can listen in on the conversation. That feature can actually fuel disputes. A heated exchange between rivals on the service can turn into a full-fledged beef when others get wind, he said. A 15-year-old nicknamed Lil V, who belongs to The New Dons, says Twitter is useful for "settin' up the fights" and making plans. He seemed aware that the cops or anyone else could follow them - and said the gang takes precautions, using lingo gangsters from an earlier era wouldn't even understand. "We got our own page," Lil V said. "Our page is private."

Gang Suspects Videotaped Violent Assaults to Sell Online

Published by the Fox 31 KDVR.COM November 23, 2009

DENVER, CO | Two suspects are being sought in a roundup of gang members suspected of videotaping robberies and assaults, then selling the tapes as entertainment. A third suspect police were looking for was located and arrested late Sunday.

Denver police Friday announced 32 arrests of suspects who said they belonged to either the Rollin' 60s Crips gang or the Black Gangster Disciples gang. They are accused of robbing white or Latino men of wallets, iPods, and cash.



Two suspects had not been arrested as of Sunday. A task force of Denver police, the FBI and District Attorney Mitch Morrissey's office identified 26 incidents since July. The assaults and robberies happened across Denver, including in the Lower Downtown, or LoDo, entertainment district which includes the 16th Street Mall near Coors Field and the Pepsi Center.

New LA Anti-Gang Department Sought

Published by the DailyBreeze.com November 23, 2009

LOS ANGELES, CA | After four years of review and with gang crime at its lowest level in years, a city official said Monday it is time to create a new department and move anti-gang programs out of the offices of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Councilman Tony Cardenas, in the final report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Gang Violence and Youth Development, said the city should begin a phased transfer of programs from the Mayor's Office into a new Department of Youth Development.

"The Mayor's Office has successfully completed phase one, which was the difficult task of consolidating all violence reduction programs," Cardenas said. "Now, the city must work to develop the infrastructure needed to move all those programs toward a long-term solution." Cardenas said he believes the best proposal would be to create a new department - with no increase beyond existing costs - using the personnel who have been hired by the mayor to work on gang diversion and intervention programs.

Villaraigosa, who met with Cardenas on Monday to discuss the proposal, issued a statement questioning the report's findings. "At a time when we need to deliver services more efficiently, creating a new government bureaucracy subject to political meddling is driving the wrong way on a one-way street," the mayor said.

Cardenas said he hoped there would be action on his proposal by March, after it's reviewed by the full City Council.

The city now spends more than \$160 million a year on various gang programs and is in the process of issuing new contracts to several organizations to run those efforts after disbanding an earlier program. It also is creating a "gang academy" to train workers on how to deal with gangs and the response to violence.

The restructuring of the city's anti-gang efforts was prompted by a report from the Advancement Project five years ago that said gang violence was costing the city more than \$2 billion a year and efforts to deal with it were disjointed and confusing. Following that, then-Controller Laura Chick released her own report echoing the findings of the Advancement Project and urging the programs be transferred to the Mayor's Office for consolidation and better coordination. At the same time, Villaraigosa made gang crime his top priority for the LAPD. In the two years since then, gang crime has dropped dramatically. The LAPD says gang crime is down 33.5 percent since 2002, with the biggest drop coming in gang shootings, which are down more than 63 percent in those years.

Connie Rice, who heads the Advancement Project, said she could not comment on Cardenas' recommendations since she is one of those bidding for a contract under the new program. The Advancement Project report, however, had called for a separate agency modeled after the LA Best after-school program, which would be a public-private agency. Jorja Leap, an adjunct professor at UCLA who worked on the reports from the Advancement Project, agreed it was time to take the next step.

"The one thread in all the reports was creating a new department," Leap said. "They may disagree on other aspects, but this is the single unifying thread."

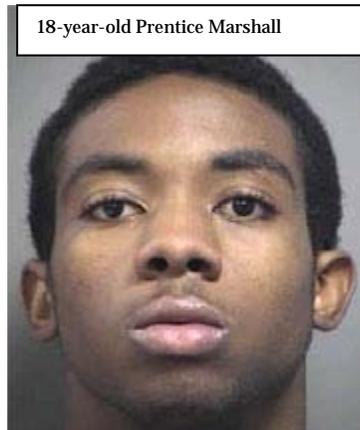
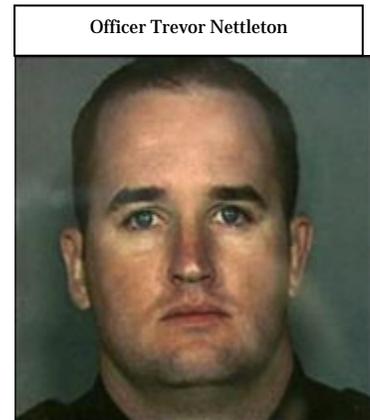
Officials Focus on Las Vegas Gang Violence

Published by the LosVegasNow.Com November 20, 2009

LAS VEGAS, NV | The murder of Officer Trevor Nettleton is shedding light on the dangers of gangs. Experts say the gang culture is found in every Las Vegas high school -- even elementary schools. That's why law enforcement hopes parents will be on alert for the signs and symbols of gangs.

This week those three young men accused of killing Nettleton were on the streets as gang members. Now they're in jail and their alleged lifestyle is still taking lives.

Just feet from where Nettleton was shot dead, a memorial grows. It's a tribute to his life of service for his country and his community -- a life cut short, authorities say, at the hands of gangbangers.



"Whenever I lose one of my law enforcement brothers, it strikes me with a lot of anger inside and it's just a tragedy that now that brother is gone," said Clark County Department of Juvenile Services gang specialist Jerry Simon. "Just when we thought we were starting to make good progress with the kids not having guns out here in the community and something like this happens. It just makes you almost feel like giving up. It hurts tremendously."



But Simon keeps on educating parents. His work is not just a guide to gangs, he says it's a wake-up call. Symbols and gestures give parents clues their sons or daughters may be members of a killer clique. Police say Officer Nettleton's murderers, 18-year-old Prentice Marshall, 20-year-old Saul Williams, Jr. and an unnamed 17-year-old male all have gang ties.

The Southern Nevada Community Gang Task Force estimates 11,000 people in the area are connected to gangs, including 5,000 minors. Officials have verified 500 different gangs around Las Vegas. This latest episode of violence has shattered lives and Simon has a message for parents: "You must take action quickly. The good news is they can be saved," he said.

By addressing gang issues early, he hopes parents can steer kids away from the dangers before they become hardened gang members. That's why he's urging parents to attend the next seminar on gang prevention. It's at 6 p.m. on Thursday, December 3, 2009 at the Pearson Community Center.

Suspected Northwest Jacksonville Gang Members Arrested in RICO Investigation: Each was charged as a member of the 45th Street Gang

Published by the Jacksonville.com on November 13, 2009.

JACKSONVILLE, FL Police arrested 13 men this week they say are linked to a Northwest Jacksonville gang that ripped off and roughed up residents in and around West 45th Street and Moncrief Road for more than a year.

The arrests were the culmination of an 18-month joint investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. Each was charged as a member of the 45th Street Gang, according to arrest reports. They all live in Jacksonville. If convicted, the men face a maximum of 60 years in prison under the Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations statute, commonly called RICO. Undersheriff Frank Mackesy said members sold drugs, stole from locals, feuded with other criminal organizations and generally terrorized people in the area.

"We know they've done murders and assaults, but we haven't been able to prove that yet," Mackesy said. One of the arrested suspects, 22-year-old Tyrone Curtis Gantt, faces additional felonies including homicide, drug and gun possession.

Other gang members are on the streets, and the undersheriff said more arrests are imminent. He wouldn't say how many other 45th Street members police have identified. Others arrested were: Raylan Leon Johnson, 22; Travis Justin Green, 26; Tyree Curshawn Gantt, 19; Deron Loven Johnson, 20; Freddie N. Richardson, 20; Steve McGarrett Sutton, 19; Oscar Giles III, 21; Donnell Raynard Carter, 19; Terry Antonio Smith, 21; Bimely West, 19; Derrick D. Kirkland, 23; and Edward Cornelius Haney, 20. Mackesy said the gang operated as a collective and didn't defer to any leader. Some were already in jail on other charges. They wore specific colors and employed coded hand signals and greetings, but he wouldn't elaborate on the specifics.

Matt O'Keefe, a division chief with the State Attorney's Office who acts as a liaison to the Sheriff's Office's Gang Unit, said the suspects will be prosecuted jointly for multiple crimes including car theft, gun possession and



