



G.A.I.N.

GANG ACTIVITY INFORMATION NETWORK



Volume 6, Issue 1

January 2010

United States
Department
Of Justice



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Northern District
of Indiana

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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS



Habitual gunman put away for killing

Published by the JournalGazette.com on December 19, 2009

ALLEN COUNTY, IN Anthony Parish turned 20 in the Allen County Jail, and it's likely the rest of his birthdays will be noted behind bars, a consequence of a brief adult life spent surrounded by guns, drugs and violence.

On Friday, Parish was sentenced to 86 years in prison for the August 2008 murder and robbery of Antoine Woods outside a Fort Wayne bar. The murder was reportedly over a necklace, one that Parish stole and then wore around town.

The sentence will be served after he does the 90 years he's already serving for two other, unrelated, attempted murders.



All the crimes involved guns. A suspected member of the Fort Wayne gang the D-Boys, Parish, in one of the other shootings, had his arm in a sling in August 2008 when he shot a then-42-year-old man as he walked along Suttentfield Street.

A few weeks earlier, Parish, then a teenager, was shot himself outside the home of Mack Porter, a 22-year-old accused of shooting to death 17-year-old Randall Paris on March 31, 2009.

When police found Parish sitting outside Porter's home, his shirt soaked in blood, Parish claimed he had no idea who shot him. He had been sitting in a car outside the house when another car drove by with someone hanging out a window firing a gun. Porter helped Parish after he was shot.

A few weeks later, someone shot Parish in the calf as he retrieved his cigarettes from his grandmother's car in a north-side neighborhood.

At a summer hearing in the Woods murder case, police officers testified they were afraid of Parish as they approached his car at a traffic stop; that they had been told he threatened to kill police officers if he encountered them; and he was reportedly taking methamphetamine to make himself able to withstand the pain of the bullet wounds.

“Things just come to a head with someone like Anthony Parish,” said Fort Wayne Police Capt. Paul Shrawder, captain of the investigative division. “Where it starts really getting bad and they are shooting each other all the time. Enough stuff comes up and cases can be developed and they kind of fall quickly as a group.”

While some of that might have been bragging within the gang, Shrawder said, police were already working on a strong case against Parish and others.

During Friday’s sentencing hearing, Parish’s father, Andre Parish, said his son is a good kid and asked for leniency because of the number of years the younger Parish is already set to serve.

“He’ll be an old man if he gets out,” his father said. “How much damage can he do? I don’t think he deserves to be in prison for the rest of his life.”

In a letter his mother wrote to the court, read by defense attorney John Bohdan, Parish is described as a “caring, loving brother, son and grandson.” But for Woods’ family, Parish is the one who took their son, their brother and their loved one.

“It was a petty crime,” said April Woods, Antoine Woods’ sister-in-law. “If you wanted the necklace, he’d have given it to you. We have nothing now. He was a caregiver to his mother. We just have a grave, where we go to push leaves off his body. To believe it all boils down to a necklace.”

Allen Superior Court Judge Fran Gull noted Parish’s juvenile history and that he had been released from Indiana Boys School just months before he was found with a handgun.

Allen County Deputy Prosecutor Steve Godfrey said he has seen 20-year-olds with more extensive criminal records but none with the combination of such serious charges at such a young age. “Anthony Parish was a huge arrest for us,” Godfrey said after the sentencing. “And I think it did quiet things down for us. Unfortunately, there may be little people ready to step up and take his place.” And it doesn’t take too long to fill that vacuum, Shrawder said. “Though there’s a lull and a void, that is then filled by those younger kids,” the detective said.

Husband, wife report being attacked

Published by Heraldargus.com on December 22, 2009

LA PORTE, IN| A husband and wife in La Porte told police that they were attacked by alleged gang members.

Saturday, at about 10 p.m., police said the man and woman in their late 20s were on foot in the 300 block of Grove Street when a car occupied by four individuals with red bandanas over their faces approached.

Two of the occupants began hitting the man while the other two suspects started hitting his wife.

According to police, one of the subjects fled on foot while the three others took off in a blue Dodge Shadow. Police said the husband had a bloody nose and cuts to his lips.

Aurora man guilty in killing of rival gang member

Published by the ChicagoTribune.com on January 1, 2009

ST. CHARLES, IL | An Aurora man was found guilty Thursday of two counts of first-degree murder for gunning down a man who flashed rival gang signs at him.

Lorenzo Alvarez, 22, faces a minimum 45-year prison sentence for the March 6, 2007, shooting death of Oscar Campos of Aurora. Campos, 36, was a passenger in a van that had stopped at East and North avenues in Aurora where three young men were standing.

When Campos got out of the van and flashed gang signs at the three, one of them pulled out a semi-automatic handgun and began firing, authorities said. Campos was shot in the back, but he managed to get back into the van, which sped away. He died later that night in an Aurora hospital.

Alvarez was arrested about three weeks later after police received a tip that he was the gunman.

Kane County Judge Timothy Sheldon, who presided over Alvarez's bench trial last month, said the testimony of the other two men with Alvarez at the time, who implicated him, convinced Sheldon of Alvarez's guilt, along with physical evidence.

The judge noted that police found bullets in Alvarez's house that matched spent casings collected at the scene of the shooting.

Other witnesses testified that the shooting earned Alvarez full membership in his gang and that he threw a party to celebrate.

Sheldon also found that Alvarez personally discharged the firearm that caused Campos' death, meaning he will receive a 25-year add-on to his murder sentence. Since the minimum murder sentence is 20 years, Alvarez could be sentenced to at least 45 years in prison.

Sheldon set sentencing for Feb. 17. Alvarez is awaiting trial on another gang-related murder in Aurora. Should he be convicted in that case, he would face an automatic sentence of life in prison.

Cops: 3 Waukegan gang members arrested

Published by the Dailyherald.com on December 23, 2009

WAUKEGAN, IL | Three reputed street gang members were arrested Wednesday as part of a monthlong weapons investigation, Waukegan police announced. Police said they had search warrants issued by a Lake County judge when they raided three homes.

Learvin Sambrano, 31 of the 300 block of Longview Road, was charged with unlawful use of weapon by a felon and unlawful use of weapon-short barrel. Police said among the weapons found in Sambrano's home was a partially loaded assault rifle with a drum magazine capable of holding 75 rounds.

Luis Rivera, 23, of the 2400 block of Catalpa Street, was charged with unlawful use of a weapon by a felon, unlawful possession of cannabis, unlawful possession of a controlled substance and unlawful possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver. Authorities said Rivera had a police-style protective tactical vest and a ballistic helmet.

Michael Edmonds, 21, was charged with unlawful use of a weapon by a felon, unlawful possession of cannabis, unlawful possession of a controlled substance and unlawful possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver. Cops said they found cocaine, marijuana and three firearms in Edmond's home.

The suspects were held in the Waukegan police lockup awaiting a bond hearing in Lake County Circuit Court. Waukegan police said a congressional gang suppression grant helped them to work the case. The department's Neighborhood Enforcement Team and Special Weapons and Tactics Team participated in the raids.

Teens charged in Oswego gang shooting

Published by DailyHerald.com on December 22, 2009



Zachary Reyes, left, Francisco D. Salazar (Handout)

OSWEGO, IL | Two young Aurora men faced murder charges Tuesday for what police deemed a gang-related weekend shooting in Oswego. Officers responded to a 911 call of gunfire just before 1 a.m. Sunday near Douglas and Long Beach roads in Oswego.

Afterward, they found a stalled car in a nearby homeowner's yard. Two of the occupants suffered multiple gunshot wounds. A third person was not injured.

East Aurora High School student Jason Ventura, 17, was pronounced dead at the scene. Another teen, Eduardo Gaytan, 18, of Montgomery, remained in serious condition late Tuesday at Rush-Copley Medical Center in Aurora.

Oswego Detective Rob Sherwood said officers were able to get a description of a second car that witnesses said was involved in the shooting. Police later made a traffic stop near Broadway and Evans Avenue in Aurora of a similar car as that described by witnesses. So far, Kendall County prosecutors have charged two of the occupants.

Zachary A. Reyes, 16, of the 500 block of Webster Street, and Francisco D. Salazar, 20, of the 100 block of High Street, both of Aurora, are charged with first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, aggravated battery with a firearm, and aggravated discharge of a firearm.

Reyes is being tried as an adult. He remains held on a \$3 million bond in the Kane County juvenile detention center, pending a Jan. 7 court appearance in Kendall County. Salazar, due in court Jan. 21, is being held on a \$1.5 million bond.

Sherwood said the investigation continues. He declined to say whether any weapons were recovered, or if police gleaned confessions. The fatal shooting was gang related, Sherwood said, but it did not appear to be in retaliation for a specific earlier incident.

90 cameras to be installed outside CPS schools

Published by the Chicago Sun-Times, on December 19, 2009

CHICAGO, IL | Ninety cameras will be installed outside Fenger and 39 other Chicago Public high schools to stop what Mayor Daley called the ugly "epidemic of children killing children," thanks to a \$2.25 million gift from the banking giant that employs the mayor's brother, Sun-Times reports.

Last year, a bloody weekend for CPS students prompted Daley to link 4,844 cameras inside schools and 1,437 exterior school cameras to police districts, squad cars and the 911 center. Until that time, real-time video from school cameras was accessible only to school security.

Thanks to J.P. Morgan Chase, where William Daley serves as Midwest chairman, 40 more high schools will get exterior cameras. They include Fenger, where 16-year-old Derrion Albert was beaten to death in September during a brawl captured on videotape and played around the world.

Another camera will be installed outside Walter H. Dyett High School, 555 E. 51st St., where two students have been murdered this year.



The extra layer of protection can't come soon enough for sophomore Brandi Wilson, who's tired of "gang wars" that sometimes extend her school day.

"They happen around 3 p.m. or 4 p.m. when we're getting out of school, and I just don't feel safe," Wilson said after Daley's news conference at Dyett.

"I call my mom and I tell her, 'Mom, I'm not coming home right now. I'm staying inside of the school because there's shooting going on outside or there's a gang fight going on outside.' And she's like, 'They're gonna have to do something. I don't like that you don't feel protected.'"

With the outdoor camera, Wilson said, "Maybe we can concentrate more on our school work instead of having to worry about the next violent thing that's gonna happen."

Schools CEO Ron Huberman stressed that some of the new cameras would be "outside the immediate envelope" of the school because that's where the violence takes place.

Daley stressed that none of the new cameras would have blue strobe lights that carry the stigma of a high-crime area. "You won't even see this unless you're looking for it," he said.

National 

L.A. Gangs Seek Profit in Peace

Published by WSJ.com on December 30, 2009

Violence Ebbs as Criminal Alliances Emerge in New Test for Authorities

LOS ANGELES, CA | After nearly two decades fighting gangs, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Detective Robert Lyons thought he had seen it all. Until he saw members of the Bloods and the Crips -- rival gangs that spent years in brutal conflict -- meeting amiably in a restaurant.

"They were talking. There was hugging and high-fiving. It was unbelievable," Mr. Lyons said. He has heard a refrain from gang members: Red (the Bloods) and blue (the Crips) make green (money).

Gangs that were once bloody rivals now are cooperating to wring profits from the sale of illegal drugs and weapons, law-enforcement officials and gang experts say. In some cases, gangs that investigators believed to be



sworn enemies share neighborhoods and strike business deals. The collaboration even crosses racial lines, remarkable in a gang world where racial divisions are sharp and clashes are often racially motivated.

Gang activity has been one of the most intractable crime problems facing Southern California for decades, terrorizing communities, claiming hundreds of lives a year in some periods and also breeding a nexus of criminal activity that has been exported to other communities. Los Angeles, along with Chicago, has long been considered one of the centers of gang activity in the U.S.

But gang-related violence is at a 30-year low in Los Angeles, according to experts. Gang-related homicides in Los Angeles totaled 128 in through October of this year, compared with 312 in all of 2002. All reported gang-related crimes, including rape, assault and robberies, totaled 4,899 through October, compared with 7,432 in 2002.

The sharp drop is undoubtedly a landmark success for law-enforcement officials and policy makers, who have used aggressive policing and rehabilitation programs to tackle the problem. But the reports of alliances between formerly warring gangs potentially offers a different explanation: Gangs are committing less violence because they are partnering on criminal activity, creating new challenges for law enforcement.

"Now, instead of having 200 guys that are arch-enemies with 200 other guys, you have 400 guys working together against law enforcement," said the sheriff's detective, Mr. Lyons.

Tracking the number of gang members is notoriously tricky, and membership is fluid. But a November report from the California Gang Node Advisory Committee, which attempts to track gang membership, put the number of gang members at 85,832 in Los Angeles County, up slightly from recent years.

And the number of gang members has been on the upswing nationally. There were about one million gang members in the U.S. in 2008, up from 800,000 in 2005, according to the National Gang Threat Assessment, compiled by the National Gang Intelligence Center and the National Drug Intelligence Center.

Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck said gangs are "treating their activities more like businesses than before. In business, you work with whoever you have to." This collaboration can make tracking gang crime and dismantling gangs more complicated. Members of street gangs are showing up unexpectedly in health-care and credit-card fraud investigations, which have traditionally been run by Eastern European crime rings.

During a two-year investigation of the Athens Park Bloods, an African-American gang entrenched in south Los Angeles, investigators learned the members had formed a pact with a Hispanic gang called Barrio 13. Eventually, 22 people were charged -- 20 African-Americans and two Hispanics.

"They shared the same guns, the same narcotics, the same neighborhood," said Mr. Lyons, the sheriff's detective.

Living the American dream, with a gang twist

Published by the LATimes.com on December 31, 2009

LOS ANGELES, CA | Some members of Florencia 13, one of L.A.'s largest gangs, live a suburban, settled lifestyle with good jobs. But they are proud of their ties to the gang, which they call 'the neighborhood.'

In a working-class neighborhood east of the Los Angeles city limits, Roberto Becerra ducked under the eave of the Spanish-tile roof he recently rebuilt for his mother and stepped into the RV parked in the driveway.

He's been working on the camper for months now. New carpeting. A TV on a swivel. Little houseplants on the bookshelves, tied to the wall so they don't fall over. The thing's got some years on it; the sunset-style paint job screams 1970s. "But it's coming along," he said, brushing his hand along the new drapes.



Becerra's is a thoroughly suburban American life. Sort of. Look closer, though, and you'll find a curious key chain hanging from a nail on one wall of the house. It's the hand of a skeleton, the fingers contorted to form the letter "F."

There's another "F" next to Becerra's right eye. Another on the hockey jersey he bought his girlfriend recently. Another on the bill of the hard hat he wears at work -- reminders, everywhere, of his allegiance to one of the largest and most confounding gangs in the metropolis: Florencia 13.

In recent years, Florencia has been subjected to mass arrests and one of the largest federal indictments of a California street gang. The Los Angeles County district attorney's office set aside a prosecutor to exclusively handle homicides committed on Florencia's turf.

Once gangs evolve into full-fledged criminal enterprises, authorities often saddle them with court injunctions that limit their movements and activities. Florencia has three such injunctions.

But according to law enforcement officials and gang members, Florencia has grown ever more powerful and influential, subsuming smaller gangs and staying ahead of the police by diversifying its criminal pursuits.

According to gang members, Florencia now has 46 active "cliques" and as many as 7,000 members. "They are so deeply rooted," said Adan Torres, a veteran Los Angeles County sheriff's detective who has devoted much of his career to policing Florencia. "You can't go on any block without encountering one of them. . . . The homeowners are former gangbangers who made it, but now their kids are gangbanging. It's a cycle."

Florencia has become both a menacing street gang and a way of life. In that void, there are hundreds of *veteranos* like Roberto Becerra -- proud, unapologetic members of Florencia, yet seemingly uninvolved in the gang's criminal enterprises.

Becerra is known to all as Flaco, the nickname he has scrawled on the ceiling of his otherwise spotless RV. He lives a content, uncluttered life in an odd netherworld, a 43-year-old man with "TOWN DRUNK" tattooed across his knuckles and two hands clasped in prayer etched on his chest, a gang member with a day job and a business card.

Born in the '50s

Borrowing its name from East Florence Avenue, Florencia began in the 1950s as a neighborhood protector near Roosevelt Park, a bustling, diverse enclave of bungalow-style housing built to serve the workers at the nearby factories. It was a time of fedoras and zoot suits, of car clubs and doo-wop music like that Paragons tune, which was adopted as the gang's theme song, "Florence," by The Paragons, 1957.

But in the ensuing years, Florencia moved into increasingly serious criminal enterprises, particularly after becoming an ally of the Mexican Mafia, a powerful prison-based "supergang" that shapes much of the state's gang activity.

Authorities say several ranking members of Florencia are also members of the Mexican Mafia. "La Eme," they say, has assisted Florencia's efforts to control the flow of drugs into a sizable chunk of L.A. It has also made Florencia famously disciplined. Members are expected to stay in top physical condition; that way, if they're arrested, they can assist in maintaining control of the prison yards, according to those familiar with the gang.

Florencia works with Latin American cartels to smuggle cocaine, according to federal officials, and recently it became one of the first gangs to introduce the traditionally rural drug methamphetamine into the city's core. Authorities say the gang also does a thriving business in identity theft and is responsible for much of the area's bootleg DVDs.

'It's who you are'

No matter how much pressure is applied to Florencia, men like Roberto "Flaco" Becerra, who act not as criminals but as elders and mentors, will continue to be the tendons connecting the gang with the community itself.

There is a Flaco, it seems, in every Latino gang in L.A.; it means "skinny" in Spanish. This Flaco was an excellent student, but his interest waned toward the end of high school. He was arrested for the first time as a teenager, for shoplifting magazines, and left school shortly before graduation. The gang, he calls it "the neighborhood" came calling about the same time. He was brought in with a traditional 13-second beating that left him with a busted lip and a broken rib. It was, he said, simply what you did.

"It just happens," he said. "It's just your neighborhood. It's who you are."

He began working on construction sites and was soon asked to run portions of the jobs. Today he is something akin to a superintendent, with 20 employees on several sites, most in the Hollywood area.

These are long-term assignments. He's been on one job site for four years; his first day there he directed traffic on Sunset Boulevard while the demolition crews pulled in. More recently he took a set of promotional photos himself, showing the development's ocean views.

"From the ground up," Becerra said as he inspected a couple of new units on a recent afternoon. He has an eye for detail; on the way out of one unit, he examined a banister and realized that it would not be acceptable to the developer because it was too close to the edge of the stairs. Someone could pinch a hand walking down the stairs, he said, so the banister would have to be moved.

"It's fun," he said of his job. "The day goes quickly when you like what you're doing."

At the same time that his career has moved forward, he has had bullets scrape the back of his head, leaving a line along his scalp. "I was lucky," he said. "I just never got hit."

He is entrusted to hand out paychecks to his employees on Fridays -- and entrusted to count the 13 seconds when a new member is "courted" into the gang with a beating: "One one thousand, two one thousand . . ."

"I got a brain. I came from a good family. My main priority in life is to take care of my family," he said.

"But my neighborhood is with me too. And it's never going to go away. Never."

For more information on this story visit: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-southla-florenca31-2009dec31,0,3598817.story?page=3>

30 Deep gang dangerous and prolific, police say

Published by AJC.com on December 15th, 2009

ATLANTA, GA | The group known as 30 Deep recruits them young and demands loyalty that it usually gets. They sell drugs, stolen high-end jeans and expensive electronics, police say.

"They've done everything from homicide to burglaries to robberies," said Sgt. Archie Ezell, a member of the Atlanta Police Department's gang unit. "They've done it all. Right now, they are one of the more active gangs."



On Tuesday, two juveniles and four adults became the most recent 30 Deep gang members arrested. Atlanta police say they connected the six to a theft at a Radio Shack store on Metropolitan Parkway and to a smash and grab at Georgio's Big and Tall men's store at Greenbriar Mall.

"They're all over the place," said Maj. Debra Williams, who oversees the APD gang unit. "What we're targeting them for now is thefts, burglaries, smash and grabs and stealing blue jeans."

30 Deep prefer commercial robberies to home robberies, police say. But they have been accused of home invasions. "What makes them different is they are persistent," Ezell said. "They will go out and do a crime and they don't mind doing two or three burglaries a night. They're always on the move, always wanting to do some kind of crime." All their criminal activity is a business, Williams said

Ezell said 30 Deep uses the money it gets from robberies and the proceeds from selling what they steal to buy narcotics to sell for even more money "It's like a circle," The members are getting younger as well; it's common to arrest 13- and 14-year-olds, Ezell said.

Police believe the group started in the Mechanicsville neighborhood near Turner Field. There were 30 buildings in the apartment complex where the gang started, and that is how the members came up with the name.

Like most gangs, 30 Deep has spread beyond the poor neighborhood where it began. But unlike most gangs, there is no hierarchy. There are "leaders and followers," but no one person in charge, Ezell said. "It's not a traditional gang," Williams added. "It's a hybrid. They may have 20 members one day, may have 30 the next. They recruit kids hanging out in the neighborhoods. They, the members are not growing up in the gangs."

Gang Task Force Is Model for Rest of Country

Published by Local12.com on December 15th, 2009

CINCINNATI, OH | Cincinnati is among 43 cities in five countries making up a new agency called the National Network of Safe Cities. Cincinnati's CIRV project - or Initiative to Reduce Violence - emerged as a model to end gang related murders elsewhere. Local 12's Deborah Dixon says the numbers calculated today show why

Cincinnati is the city which is looked up to in the fight against gang violence.

The Cincinnati police were in New York last week, meeting and talking about their experience fighting gang violence here, just as four back to back murders were happening. On December 6th, Leetae Williams killed his girlfriend then himself. The next day his half brother, upset over the death, got in a fight in Evanston according to witnesses and was killed.

Still, even after the week of violence, gang related killings in Cincinnati are still way down, and cities all over the world are noticing. Greg Baker is the Executive Director of CIRV: "CIRV initiative touted as the best practice of the 43 cities either implementing it or desiring to implement."

In July 2005, when CIRV started, to September 2007, there were 122 gang related murders in Cincinnati. From September 2005 until yesterday there were 76. That's a 38 percent drop. "We are the most organized and rigorous model."

The breakup of the Taliband gang in Northside is part of how CIRV works. Members on probation or parole are forced to meet police, clergy ex gangsters and victims. They're offered life coaching and job counseling if they give up the thug life. If they don't, swift punishment is promised.

Today there was a meeting to talk about next year. Officers plan to focus on the so called *shot caller* of the gangs - the leaders who decide whether or not someone is going to be killed.

CIRV says they have identified some 1900 gang members in the City of Cincinnati.

LAPD gang units feel the pinch of financial disclosure rule

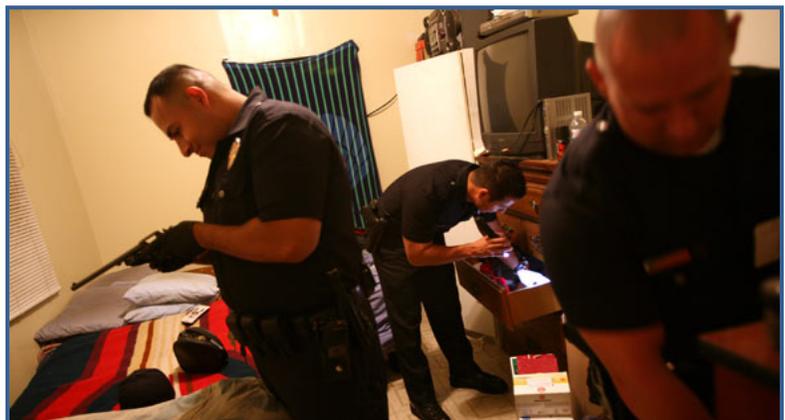
Published by the LaTimes.com on December 28, 2009

LOS ANGELES, CA | The LAPD is struggling to fill vacancies in gang units as a financial disclosure rule meant to fight corruption has been received by many rank-and-file cops as an insult and a deal-breaker when it comes to working the tough gangland assignments.

After years of contentious battles with police union representatives over the issue, Los Angeles Police Department officials pushed through a policy in April that requires gang officers to disclose details of their personal finances.

Intended to help supervisors catch cops who are taking bribes or to identify officers in financial straits who might be tempted to stray, the policy has considerable reach:

Officers must disclose outside income, real estate, stocks and other assets. They also have to report the size of bank accounts and debts, including mortgages and credit cards. And the disclosures apply to any financial holdings a cop shares with family members and business partners.



When it went into effect, then-Chief William J. Bratton and other officials insisted that the policy would have little effect on recruiting and retaining gang cops and vowed to block efforts by officers to leave gang units en masse in protest.

But erosion in the ranks is apparent. According to interviews with police officers and gang unit supervisors across the city, the number of officers dedicated to fighting gangs is beginning to drop. And top brass now acknowledge that they must do more to confront discontent and distrust.

Earlier this year, for instance, supervisors at the Newton Area station in South Los Angeles, where 51 street gangs are active in the nine-square-mile patrol area, received permission from higher-ups to add 14 officers to the station's gang operation. It was welcome news and would have nearly doubled the number of officers dedicated to gang activity. Few officers, however, applied for the job.

The policy also includes officers serving on narcotics details, although the discontent seems focused among gang officers. The roughly 600 officers already assigned to affected units when the policy went into effect in April were granted a two-year grace period, and so far it appears that few, if any, officers have left a gang assignment rather than sign the forms. The problem, the supervisors say, is one of attrition.

LAPD officers have traditionally moved from one assignment to the next with great regularity. Gang units are affected along with all other divisions. But now, officers who want to join gang units for the first time have to sign the disclosure forms, and few appear willing to do that.

Supervisors and gang officers, however, said the problem is serious. One South L.A. gang unit that had 18 officers at the beginning of the year is down to 13, with more departures expected in the coming months. Another had 35 gang officers; it now has 24. Newton eventually filled most of the new positions approved by the department, but only by poaching gang officers from other stations, not by training new ones. Today, seven months after the positions were approved, five remain vacant.

In interviews, officers gave numerous reasons why they would seek assignments elsewhere in the department rather than abide by the disclosure rules. Some said they fear the data could be used against them in discipline proceedings or in court, and others said they question the department's ability to store the information safely. Others said the disclosure rules do little to catch or deter rogue police officers.

"Rooting out corruption is a worthy goal. This doesn't do that. It deters guys from wanting to do the job," said one gang unit supervisor. Like most gang officers interviewed for this article, he requested anonymity because



some gang units have been ordered not to discuss the effects of the rule.

Although some other federal and local law enforcement agencies require disclosures by their officers, officials of the Police Protective League, LAPD's union, said a survey turned up none as extensive as L.A.'s. The problem is seen as particularly acute and time-sensitive in South L.A., not because of what's gone wrong but because of what's gone right.

Crime has dropped in many areas of the city but has seen a particularly pronounced decline in South L.A. By the end of October, for instance, no station had recorded a sharper decline in serious crime than Newton, a 15.2% decline from

the same period in 2008. Gang members are responsible for the majority of serious crime in Newton, and the station had recorded 656 gang arrests through the end of October, a 76.8% increase over the 371 arrests made through the same period in 2008.

Gang unit supervisors said they expect the shortage of new, qualified gang officers to accelerate next year. The troubles, they said, will climax in early 2011, when the grace period for existing gang officers expires and

everyone serving in a gang unit will be required to sign the disclosure forms. That, one supervisor contended, will result in a "mass exodus."

For more information on this story visit: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-gangcops28-2009dec28,0,1554614,full.story>

The peacemaker: On a crusade to stop gang violence

Published by the StarTribune.com on December 2, 2009

MINNEAPOLIS, MN | K.G. Wilson stood at the intersection of W. Broadway and Lyndale Avenue N., recently and called out the gang members and drug dealers mingled in the crowd.

A former gangbanger preaches the joys of hope and change to gangsters and drug dealers on the North Side's mean streets.

"We're taking on evil," he proclaimed through a bullhorn. "You don't see men over 40 being murdered here. It's always kids. ... Why are grandparents going to their grandchildren's funerals?"

At least once a week, Wilson commandeers Minneapolis' meanest streets with his 6-foot-3, 275-pound frame and a bullhorn.



"He'll sit right in front of the ones doing the dealing and talk about what they are trying to do," said Minneapolis police officer Patrick McCarver. "It's very brazen, very bold. ... He takes the bullhorn and starts preaching. If it makes the drug dealers uncomfortable, most of them will leave."

Wilson's philosophy is as simple as his in-your-face delivery. "You have to stand up and not be afraid," he barked into his bullhorn during his recent North Side appearance. Officer David Roiger calls Wilson's style risky but effective. At homicide scenes, Wilson comforts families and friends, Roiger said. But eventually he holds a noisy vigil in which, Roiger said, "he confronts not only the shooters, but the people hiding them."

"K.G. tries to shame" gang members and drug dealers, Roiger said. "He tells them that's not how good people act. He's actually out to make people better, not to get rich, and not to be a media whore. He did the gangbanging and the drug dealing. They know he's not some white farm boy from Worthington trying to preach the Gospel. He's lived in roach-infested houses, eating ketchup sandwiches, and gotten himself out of it."

Wilson knows he infuriates drug dealers because his interference costs them money. He doesn't care. He understands the consequences of selling dope and being a thug. He was a Black Gangster Disciples gang leader on Chicago's South Side in the 1980s and 1990s. His drug problems threatened to destroy him after he moved to Minnesota around 2000. Court records show that he battled with the law until 2006. Since then, he's kept his demons at bay, pouring himself into a war against gangs and drugs.

Though homicides are down in Minneapolis, the neighborhoods where Wilson operates remain among the cities most violent. Community activists say too many young people still lack the hope and opportunities that would keep them away from crime.

Wilson knows what that's like. "I was raised in a foster home," he said. "My mother was an intravenous drug user. In the foster home, I was abused. I chose the gangs because they looked to me like a family. I didn't care what they were doing. I saw them hugging and smiling and doing things that weren't part of my foster home."

As a gangster, Wilson taught others the "chain of command of the streets," he said. As a drug user, he fought addiction. "It wasn't that I was tough," he said. "I was terrified."

Pushing hope over dope

At Lyndale and Broadway, no fear quaked in the voice amplified by the bullhorn.

"We are men and women who came from the streets like you. We don't represent that we are better than anyone who is out here. We represent that you can be better than what you are. We want to turn the dope spot into a hope spot. I'm talking about that Jesus dope. All you need is one good hit."

Wilson says people have stopped to turn over their guns or to ask how to get addiction treatment or to find homes and jobs.

In a typical outing, he'll work his way from a troubled section of south Minneapolis, where he lives, to a downtown shelter and then to the North Side. Often accompanying him is Merriam Rice, the sister of Chicago street gang leader Jeff Fort, founder of El Rukns, the blood rivals of Wilson's old posse, the Black Gangster Disciples

Striving to make peace

A couple of years ago, Wilson's son, Damion Curtell, got shot in Illinois. Curtell survived, but family and friends asked him to come back to get even because "I was the one who came with guns to take care of people,"

Wilson said. Emphasis on *was*. A minister, not a gang chief, went to Chicago and delivered the hard truth. This is my son that I told if he didn't stay away from gangs and drugs, he'd get shot," Wilson said. "This is my son that sees I turned my life around

"When you come to my funeral, it won't be the story of a gangbanger and a drug dealer, but someone who died a peacemaker."

For more information and video coverage of this story visit:
<http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/77836752.html?page=1&c=y>

From the Editors 



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