

# Special Needs Offenders

# BULLETIN

a publication of the Federal Judicial Center

In correctional institutions, there is a natural tendency for inmates to form groups, both formal and informal. One of the first documented prison gangs, the Gypsy Jokers, appeared in a Washington state penitentiary in the early 1950s. The first known prison gang with a national scope, the Mexican Mafia, emerged soon after, in 1957, in the California prison system.

During the 1960s and '70s, prisoners formed gangs primarily to protect themselves and to monopolize illegal prison activities such as gambling, trading contraband, narcotics trafficking, and committing contract murders. The gangs' organization and operations mirrored those of street gangs and traditional organized crime families. Over the years, the type, nature, and number of prison gangs have changed dramatically. Prison gangs today range from national "supergangs" to small regional gangs structured along paramilitary lines. Prison gangs are found in both state and federal penitentiaries.

Traditional prison gangs, such as the Texas Syndicate, the Mexican Mafia, and the Aryan Brotherhood, are characterized by structure. They

have distinct organizational hierarchies and "constitutions"—regulations that govern operations, recruitment, misconduct, and membership. Most prison gangs recruit along ethnic or racial lines. Members are generally over the age of 25 and have extensive experience with the criminal justice system. Most have already served time

## Examples of Gangs Found in U.S. Prisons

Traditional prison gangs operating in U.S. prisons include the Aryan Brotherhood, La Nuestra Familia, Texas Syndicate, Black Guerrilla Family, and the Mexican Mafia. The Mexikanemi is a more recent

by  
**Dennise  
Orlando-Morningstar**

# PRISON GANGS

in prison. Membership is usually for life, and discipline is strict; members who violate the group's principles or directives may be assaulted or killed.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports that prison gangs currently account for a high percentage of prison violence and are creating increasingly severe management problems in federal correctional institutions. Prison gangs have considerable influence over other inmates. Their criminal activities include loan sharking, narcotics trafficking, protection, prostitution, robbery, witness intimidation, and murder. State and federal correctional officials predict that as more people are incarcerated, the volume and intensity of gang-related problems will grow. ♦

gang now considered a major prison gang within the federal system. Following are brief descriptions of each. Other prison gangs in federal institutions include the Arizona Aryan Brotherhood, Bull Dogs, Dirty White Boys, Los Solidos, New Mexico Syndicate, Neta's, Aryan Warriors, and Mandingo Warriors.

## Aryan Brotherhood

The Aryan Brotherhood was established in San Quentin Prison in 1967 by White inmates seeking to protect themselves from Black and Hispanic inmates. Today, the primary "business" of the gang, which has spread beyond California, is drug trafficking. Like many prison gangs, the Aryan Broth-

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erhood has a “blood in, blood out” policy. Prospective members must kill to gain admission to the gang and are released from membership only by their

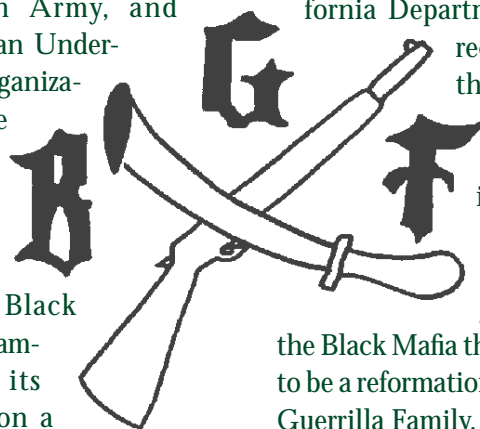


own death. In federal prisons, the Aryan Brotherhood is controlled by a council composed of three high-ranking members. Historically, the federal Aryan Brotherhood and the California Aryan Brotherhood have been closely aligned. The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports, however, that the federal gang appears to be becoming more independent and that tensions between the two gangs are increasing. Leadership within the federal gang reportedly wants to end cooperation with the Mexican Ma-

fia on drug introductions, exchange of hit contracts, and financial matters, whereas the leader of the California gang wants to continue dealing with the Mexican Mafia.

### Black Guerrilla Family

Black Panther member George Jackson started this prison gang in 1966 in San Quentin by recruiting members of other militant groups such as the Black Liberation Army, Symbionese Liberation Army, and Weatherman Underground Organization. The most politically oriented prison gang, the Black Guerrilla Family bases its doctrines on a



Marxist/Leninist/Maoist revolutionary philosophy.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports that the current re-emergence of the Black Panther Party may significantly boost the Black Guerrilla Family's influence. The gang recently issued a new constitution and code of ethics. Heavy recruiting of new members is reportedly under way in the federal and California correctional systems. In addition, the California Department of Corrections reports that a group of African-American inmates has organized a new prison gang called the Black Mafia that is believed to be a reformation of the Black Guerrilla Family.

### Gang symbols

Interspersed in the text on pages 2-4 are symbols commonly used (for instance, for tattoos) by the Aryan Brotherhood, Black Guerrilla Family, La Nuestra Familia, Mexicanemi, and Texas Syndicate.

## About the Special Needs Offenders Series

The offender and defendant population arrested, tried, and incarcerated in the federal judicial system is evolving. Changes stem primarily from public pressure for stricter law enforcement, new legislation that broadens the jurisdiction of the federal courts, and changes in law and policy resulting in larger numbers of offenders receiving prison sentences followed by supervised release.

The changing profile of federal offenders and defendants poses new challenges for federal probation and pretrial services officers. To help districts meet this challenge, the Federal Judicial Center has developed the *Special Needs Offend-*

*ers* series of educational products, on-line conferences, and satellite broadcasts. The *Special Needs Offenders* series provides officers the latest information concerning the unique offender/defendant populations on their caseloads.

The Center produces approximately two *Special Needs Offenders* programs a year. Each program deals with a different offender/defendant population and is introduced by a *Special Needs Offenders Bulletin*. The bulletins are not definitive studies of the offender/defendant populations at issue. Rather, they serve as primers outlining the general characteristics of those populations. Each bulletin is followed

by a Center-sponsored on-line conference or satellite broadcast in which officers have an opportunity to share effective case management practices and useful resources applicable to the offender/defendant population in question.

This bulletin, *Prison Gangs*, is the second in the *Special Needs Offenders* series on gangs. Officers may want to review *Prison Gangs* in conjunction with *Street Gangs*, which was published in August.

If you have any questions about the *Special Needs Offenders* programs on gangs or about the series in general, please contact Dennise Orlando-Morningstar or Mark Maggio at (202) 273-4115.

## Gang Alliances

In the 1980s, prison gangs began extending their influence beyond prison. Many allied themselves with other gangs. Although still rivals, these gangs agreed to conduct business across racial, ethnic, political, and geographic boundaries to divide prison activities, maximize profits from narcotics sales and other illegal activities, and avoid violent confrontations. The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports, for example, that the federal Texas Syndicate is

aligning itself with the Mexikanemi in its dispute against the Mexican Mafia and that a cooperative relationship may be emerging between the Mexikanemi and the Dirty White Boys.

The existence of an alliance between gangs in one prison or prison system does not necessarily mean that an inmate can coexist with a prison gang of the same name in another institution. The Bureau of Prisons points out that in Texas or Arizona, an

Aryan Brotherhood member is not automatically recognized as a member of the federal prison system's Aryan Brotherhood, and vice versa. Likewise, members of the Mexican Mafia, which originated in California, are not necessarily compatible with the Texas Mexican Mafia (Mexikanemi).

The term "associated" should only be used as a guideline, the Bureau suggests, since affiliations between gangs can change over time.

### La Nuestra Familia

La Nuestra Familia ("Our Family") originated in Soledad prison in the mid 1960s. Most

of the original members were Hispanic inmates from northern California

who were seeking to protect themselves from

the Mexican Mafia, a gang composed of Hispanic inmates from southern California cities.

La Nuestra Familia has a formal structure and rules of conduct. It is governed by a group known as "La Mesa," which resembles a board of directors. Several years ago a blood war developed between La Nuestra Familia and the Mexican Mafia over the control of drug trafficking inside prison. Recent evidence, however, indicates that the rivalry between the two gangs may be

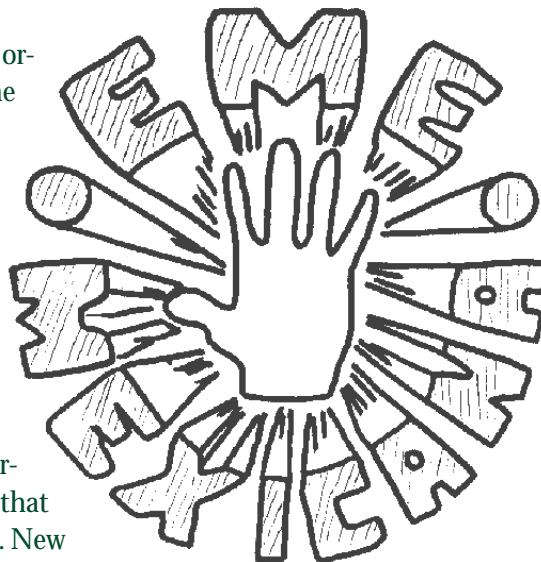
easing in California. California Department of Corrections officials report that the two gangs appear to have called a "partial truce": Some members have returned to prison without fulfilling obligations to kill each other on sight.

### Mexican Mafia

The Mexican Mafia was organized in the 1950s at the Deuel Vocational Center in Tracy, California. Not to be confused with the Mexikanemi, the Mexican Mafia is primarily composed of Hispanics from the barrios of southern California's inner cities. The gang has rules of conduct and a formal chain of command that mirrors the Italian Mafia's. New members must be sponsored by existing members and must swear a blood oath promising unquestioning loyalty to the gang for life. Gang leaders are

known for having disobedient members murdered and for using scare tactics against other gangs inside and outside prison.

The Mexican Mafia is currently at war with La Nuestra Familia. The Federal Bureau of Prisons also reports that tensions persist between the Mexi-

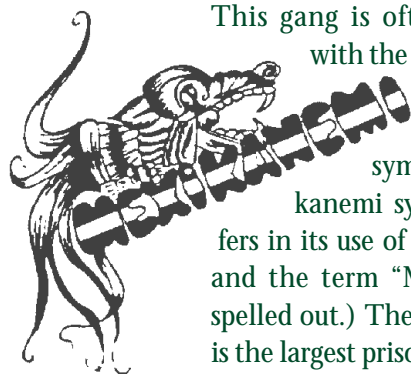


can Mafia and the Texas Syndicate. Other rivals of the Mexican Mafia include the  
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Mexikanemi and Aryan Brotherhood.

### Mexikanemi

Organized in 1984, the Mexikanemi is sometimes referred to as the Texas Mexican Mafia. This gang is often confused with the Mexican Mafia, which uses similar symbols. (Mexikanemi symbolism differs in its use of Aztec images and the term "Mexikanemi" spelled out.) The Mexikanemi is the largest prison gang in the Texas prison system and is



emerging as a significant prison gang in the federal system. Members are heavily involved in homicides inside and outside prison.

The Mexikanemi emphasize mesoamerican heritage and culture: They believe that Mexico and the southwestern United States should be returned to natives.

In February 1996 at the federal penitentiary in Florence, Colorado, the local Mexican Mafia leader stabbed the local Mexikanemi leader, leading to tensions that the Federal Bureau of Prisons says have not yet abated. Other intelligence re-

ports indicate that intermittent warring between the Mexikanemi and the Texas Syndicate has ended and that the two groups are aligning themselves against the Mexican Mafia.

### Texas Syndicate

This prison gang emerged at Deuel Vocational Institute in 1958, at Folsom Prison in the early 1970s, and at San Quentin in 1976 in response to attempts by other gangs to prey on native Texans.



The gang is currently active in the Texas prison system and the federal prison system, although recent intelligence suggests that the federal Texas Syndicate is now totally separate from all state factions of the gang.

Members are primarily Mexican-American inmates from Texas. Recently, the gang has also begun accepting members from Latin American countries such as Cuba, Colombia, and Mexico.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports that some inmates who reside in Texas but who have Guam ethnicity have also been accepted as full gang members in the federal system. The Texas Syndicate has a formal organizational structure and a set of written rules for members. One of the gang's major goals is to control drug trafficking in and out of prison. As a result, the Texas Syndicate has developed a deadly rivalry with the Mexican Mafia. ♦

### Origination of selected U.S. prison gangs

Year formed	Jurisdiction	Name of gang
1950	Washington	Gypsy Jokers
1957	California	Mexican Mafia
1958	California	Texas Syndicate
1965	California	La Nuestra Familia
1966	California	Black Guerrilla Family
1967	California	Aryan Brotherhood
mid 1970s	Arizona	Arizona Aryan Brotherhood
1977	Arizona	Arizona Old Mexican Mafia
1980	New Mexico	New Mexico Syndicate
early 1980s	Texas	Aryan Brotherhood of Texas
early 1980s	Texas	Texas Mafia
mid 1980s	California	Bulldogs
1984	Arizona	Arizona's New Mexican Mafia
1984	Texas	Mexikanemi
1984	Texas	Mandingo Warriors
1985	Federal system	Dirty White Boys
1985	California	415's
1990	Connecticut	Los Solidos

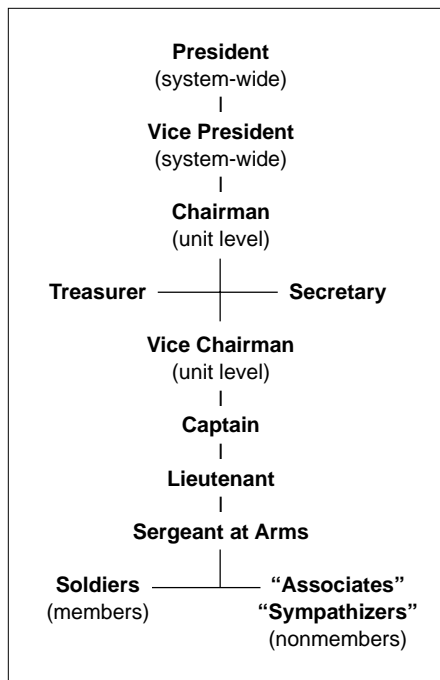


# Prison Gang Organization

Robert Fong, an assistant professor in the Department of Criminology at the University of North Carolina, studied the organization of two major prison gangs, the Texas Syndicate and the Mexikanemi. The highly structured organizations he found are characteristic of prison gangs.

## Texas Syndicate

According to Fong's study, the Texas Syndicate is headed by a president and vice president who are elected by the members. On the unit level, the Texas Syndicate is controlled by a chairman who oversees the vice chairman, captain, lieutenant, sergeant at arms and soldiers, Fong reported. With the exception of the president, vice president, chairman, and vice chairman, all other low-ranking positions are filled by individuals who have success-



Organization of the Texas Syndicate

fully performed criminal activities for the gang.

Fong's study also revealed that in order to avoid intragang conflict, a ranking member, other than the president and vice president, automatically reverts to the status of soldier when he is reassigned to a different unit by prison officials.

"The Texas Syndicate practices a democratic style of leadership," Fong said. "Each member is allowed one vote, and only when a unanimous vote is obtained will a proposal become a decision."

## Mexikanemi

Fong said that the Mexikanemi is composed of a president, vice president, regional generals, lieutenants, sergeants, and soldiers. All ranking positions within the organization, excluding the soldiers, are elected based on the individuals' leadership skills and ability to foster harmony. Fong noted that there is no system designed to avoid intragang conflict; a gang leader keeps his rank and title upon reassignment to a different unit by prison officials.

While the Mexikanemi emphasizes that no decision will be carried out unless a unanimous vote is reached, lieutenants frequently manipulate the democratic process by issuing orders to individual members without collective consent, Fong said. ♦

## Constitution of the Mexikanemi

1. Membership is for life ("blood in, blood out").
2. Every member must be prepared to sacrifice his life or take a life at any time.
3. To achieve discipline within the Mexikanemi brotherhood, every member shall strive to overcome his weaknesses.
4. Members must never let the Mexikanemi down.
5. The sponsoring member is totally responsible for the behavior of a new recruit. If the new recruit turns out to be a traitor, it is the sponsoring member's responsibility to eliminate the recruit.
6. When insulted by a stranger or group, all members of the Mexikanemi will unite to destroy the person or other group completely.
7. Members must always maintain a high level of integrity.
8. Members must never relate Mexikanemi business to others.
9. Every member has the right to express opinions, ideas, contradictions, and constructive criticism.
10. Every member has the right to organize, educate, arm, and defend the Mexikanemi.
11. Every member has the right to wear a tattoo of the Mexikanemi symbol.
12. The Mexikanemi is a criminal organization and therefore will participate in all activities of criminal interest for monetary benefits.

# Identifying Prison Gang Members

For risk management and safety reasons, officers should know if offenders or defendants on their caseloads are members of prison gangs. Prison gang members generally keep low profiles and are more secretive about gang membership than members of street gangs. There are, however, several clues that officers should be aware of.

## Tattoos and other personal identifiers

Many prison gangs can be associated with specific tattoo designs. Members may wear tattoos on the neck, chest, outside of the calf, or forearm, depending on the gang. In some cases, members may hide a gang tat-

too by putting a more intricate tattoo over it or by wearing it on the scalp or under the arms. Some prison gangs do not use tattoos. For example, members of Los Solidos use half-red, half-blue bandannas or blue and red cards with joker masks to identify each other. Members of La Nuestra Familia wear red rags as well as tattoos. Officers should note that tattoos are dynamic symbols of gang membership that can change over time.

## Photographs

Prison gangs commonly take group pictures of members while in prison. Look for tattoos or symbolic gestures de-

picted in photos that prisoners possess. Be on the lookout for group photos during home visits. Also, contact the offender's Federal Bureau of Prisons case worker; a confiscated picture may be in an offender's prison file.

## Law enforcement and prison records

Has another law enforcement agency or prison identified an offender or defendant as a member of a prison gang? Does an offender's prison record indicate that he associated with known gang members while in prison? Was gang paraphernalia confiscated from an offender's cell? An answer of yes to any of these questions may indicate gang affiliation. Check an offender's arrest and criminal records for prior arrests with known gang members, for prosecutions under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, and for crimes consistent with gang activity, such as drug trafficking, violent assaults, murders, robberies, and burglaries.

## Codes and ciphers

Many prison gangs use codes and ciphers to communicate with members inside and outside prison. Coded messages are often hidden in letters sent through the mail to released members or members in other institutions. Codes are words or terminology that have specific meanings to gang members. Some codes represent a sentence, several sentences, or an

## A Sign of Respect

It's important to note that every prison gang has a distinct culture—patterns of behavior, beliefs, and customs unique to the gang. Victor Casillas, a probation officer in the Western District of Texas, recalls one incident when his knowledge of prison gang culture was invaluable.

It was 1 p.m. and my wife and I were cutting across a parking lot, returning to our car after a festival. I saw an offender on my caseload who was a captain in the Texas Syndicate walking toward me. He had five very large, very mean-looking bodyguards with him. He motioned for me to walk over, and we started talking.

As I started walking toward the offender, my wife walked over to a nearby park bench and sat down. She was immediately surrounded by the five bodyguards, who formed a ring around her and the bench. The bodyguards looked quite intimidating; however, I knew from experience working with the Texas Syndicate that the bodyguards had surrounded my wife as a sign of respect. It was not a hostile gesture. Luckily my wife also knew this! An inexperienced officer might have misinterpreted the incident, resulting in a potentially serious situation.

## Certified Disruptive and Security Threat Groups

The Federal Bureau of Prisons tracks four traditional prison gangs as Certified Disruptive Groups: the Aryan Brotherhood, Mexican Mafia, Texas Syndicate, and Black Guerilla Family. In 1994 the Bureau added three street gangs to the list: the Crips, Bloods, and Latin Kings. The Crips and Bloods were decertified in 1996.

This year the Bureau anticipates adding the Mexicanemi to the list. Inmates

from four state systems—California, Connecticut, Illinois, and Texas—tend to account for the majority of individuals classified as members of Certified Disruptive Groups in federal prisons. Although not included in the list of Certified Disruptive Groups, a number of prison gangs in state systems have members in federal custody.

The Bureau informally tracks several of these and other gangs, including street

gangs, as Security Threat Groups. Examples of Security Threat Groups include the Arizona Aryan Brotherhood, Black Gangster Disciples, 27's, Barrio Aztecas, Neta's, Jamaican Posse, Raza Unida, Nuestra Raza, and Hell's Angels. Federal officials indicate that there are currently over 2,540 individuals who are members, suspected members, or associates of prison gangs and security threat groups in Federal Bureau of Prisons custody.

entire message. Ciphers involve transposing the 26 letters of the alphabet or substituting figures for letters.

Uncovering a letter or book containing codes or ciphers may be a clue that an offender or defendant is a prison gang member. Officers should contact an offender's Federal Bu-

reau of Prisons case worker and ask if there are confiscated letters or notes in his prison file. Such letters may also be noted during home contacts.

### Written or printed materials

Prison gang members often keep gang constitutions or

manifestos, contract or hit lists, training materials, or gang publications or insignia. Contact the offender's Federal Bureau of Prisons case worker to see if an offender's file indicates that any of these materials were confiscated from his cell. In addition, look for these materials during home visits. ♦

No one identifier proves that an offender or defendant is a member of a prison gang. Rather, identifiers are red flags signaling that an officer should carefully examine an offender's or defendant's records and conduct.

BGF Term	Meaning
Annette Brooks	Aryan Brotherhood
Bobby G. Foster	BGF
Central High	mainline
Compton	hole or segregation
D.C.	decision or deciding
kiss	marked for death
Mary Mitchell	Mexican Mafia
Nelson Franklin	Nuestra Familia
Paula	police officer
record shop	hospital
salt	hacksaw
Sammy Davis, Jr.	bootlicking
Supermarket	killed or dead

Sample Black Guerrilla Family (BGF) code

A	+	J	⊕	S	☼
B		K	⊓	T	☼
C	⋮	L	□	U	▽
D	♡	M	⌒	V	⊗
E	◇	N	X	W	⊕
F	♣	O	—	X	⊕
G	♣	P	÷	Y	⊕
H	△	Q	♡	Z	⊕
I	⊗	R	◇		

Sample La Nuestra Familia cipher. This particular cipher was found during a cell search.

# Gang Activities Outside Prison

Prison walls do not separate inmates from crime.

In 1996, Massachusetts police began investigating an inmate at a Florida prison who was suspected of using a prison telephone to order the slayings of two Massachusetts gang members. In San Jose, California, La Nuestra Familia gang members were charged with slayings thought to have been planned in the state's jails and prisons. Both cases were cited in a 1996 article in *The Washington Post* on gangs in prison.

One of the people whom reporter Marcia Green spoke with in preparing the article was Santa Clara County Deputy District Attorney Catherine Constantinides.

"While gang members

would like to insulate themselves from crime liability by saying they were incarcerated," Constantinides explained to Green, "the true masterminds are the ones who have 24 hours to sit around in jail and figure out what to do next and to who. The men in prison are sending orders out to people on the streets."

## Juveniles

Law enforcement officials assert that prison gangs have begun using street gangs to conduct prison gang activities on the outside. Prison gangs use juveniles because juveniles often receive probation for felony convictions or lighter sentences than adults. In general, street gang members are quickly re-

leased to the community, where they resume their criminal activity on behalf of the prison gang. Recent intelligence suggests, however, that in some cases the relationships between street gangs and prison gangs may be strained. For example, the Federal Bureau of Prisons reports that members of a number of small Latino street gangs coming into federal custody harbor resentments against the Mexican Mafia, which charges them a "feria" (street tax) for being allowed to conduct gang operations in Mexican Mafia territory.

## Released members

In addition to using juveniles for criminal activities, released prison gang members are expected to remain in contact with members still in prison and to conduct gang business outside prison. Released members of the Aryan Brotherhood, for example, are expected to support incarcerated members financially. The Mexican Mafia and Texas Syndicate use members outside prison to expand their narcotics trafficking activities.

Released members who generate income from drug trafficking on their own are also expected to surrender a certain percentage to the gang. The Texas Syndicate requires 10% of the member's income, the Mexican Mafia 15%. In both gangs, failure to submit the percentage is punishable by death. ♦

## Street Gangs in Prison

In the late 1980s, federal institutions began experiencing a rapid influx of inmates belonging to street gangs such as the Crips, Bloods, and Jamaican Posse. Members of Asian gangs and a wide variety of local street gangs are part of this rising tide. Many recent disturbances in prisons are attributable to members of street gangs, the Federal Bureau of Prisons reports.

Prison gangs offer the street gang members protection in and out of prison.

Some street gang members become prison gang members when incarcerated. Hispanic gang members frequently join the Mexican Mafia or La Nuestra Familia. Some African-American gang members join the Black Guerrilla Family. And White gang members sometimes join the Aryan Brotherhood.

When released from prison, gang members often return to their former street gangs but retain some allegiance to the gangs they joined in prison.



# Investigation and Supervision Issues

Because information on prison gangs is scarce, officers should draw on the experience of colleagues and other law enforcement personnel to learn what they need to know to investigate and supervise prison gang members.

As Robert Fong pointed out in his March 1990 *Federal Probation* article on the organization of prison gangs,

The inability to obtain information directly from gang members is a frustrating experience shared by both researchers and prison administrators. Thus far, the only available method for intelligence-gathering has been the sole reliance on information provided by a few voluntary former gang members who are placed on gang "death" lists and are under maximum official protection in the prisons.

Following are some of the supervision and investigation issues relevant to prison gangs. These issues were cited by experienced officers. Supervision plans and investigation activities should address these issues as much as possible, depending on the specific circumstances of each offender or defendant and on district policy and procedures.

## Lifetime membership and loyalty

Virtually all prison gangs observe exclusive membership rules; an inmate may only be a

member of one prison gang at a time. In addition, membership generally demands a blood oath that requires lifetime loyalty and obedience. Thus, officers should regard offenders as active prison gang members even after they return to the community. Be wary of offenders who claim they no longer belong to a gang.

## Ongoing criminal activity and criminal associates

Once gang members are released from prison, they are expected to continue their illegal activities and to adhere to the code of the gang. Officers should therefore assume that a released prison gang member will participate in criminal activity outside prison and will

associate with gang members and other criminals.

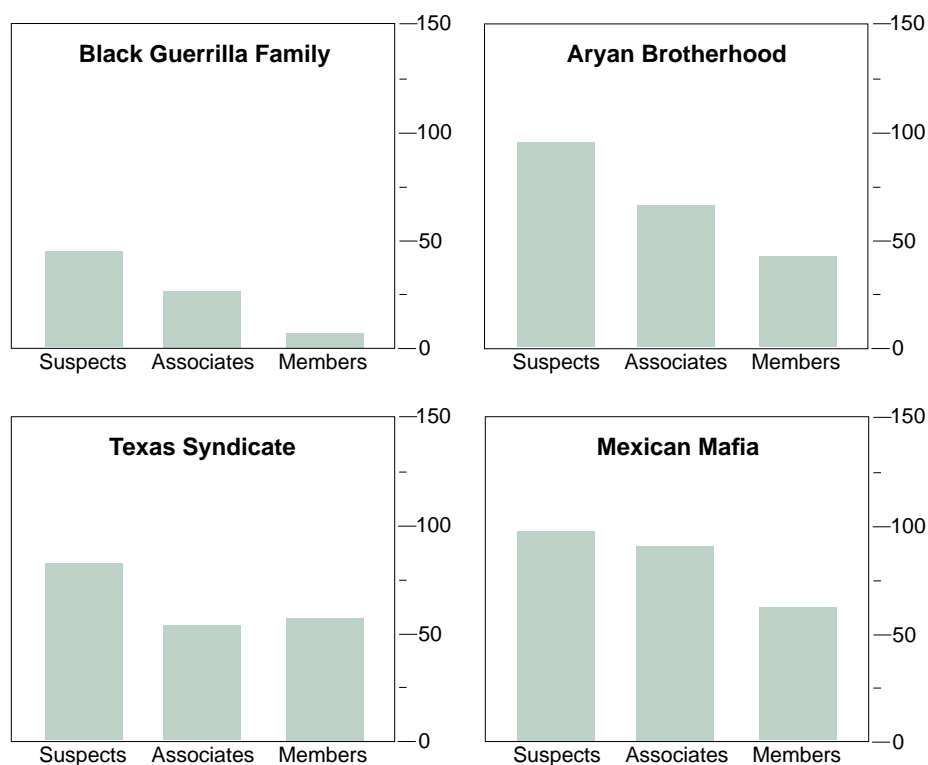
## Collateral contacts

Prison gang members often rely on females (e.g., wives, mothers, sisters, and girlfriends) to relay messages, bring contraband into prison, and provide other forms of assistance. Officers should not assume that these people are the best or only reliable collateral contacts.

## Recidivism

Some prison gang members are more comfortable in prison, with the rest of their organization, than outside prison. Consequently, it is not uncommon for released gang members to purposely violate the condi-

*(continued on next page)*



Actual 1996 Membership of Selected Prison Gangs

Source: Federal Bureau of Prisons

## White Supremacists in Prison

In the early 1980s, white supremacists began recruiting members in prison. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, white supremacist leaders representing themselves as agents of the Identify Movement are able to circumvent prison mail restrictions and contact prisoners. Further, by claiming to be church groups, white supremacist prison gangs are able to hold meetings and recruit members in prison, the Law Center says. The consequences of these recruitment efforts are serious.

“White supremacist prisoners have proven records of violence and crime,” the Law Center reports. “Their views are typically hardened by prison life, and they emerge from prison eager to spread their gospel of hatred and violence.”

(continued from page 9)

tions of their supervision in order to return to prison. In addition, many gang members know they may spend less time serving their sentence in prison than they would completing it under supervised release or probation. Other gang members wish to return to prison to accomplish a specific task, such as establishing an outside drug connection, carrying out a hit, or relaying specific instructions or communication from a gang leader on the outside. According to Probation Officer Stephen Alvarez (Southern District of Texas), however, prison gang members generally violate within the first six months, or not at all.

### Violence and weapons

Prison gangs almost universally endorse the use of violence. And since gangs tend to be well organized and well financed, gang members often have access to high-powered weapons. Therefore, officers should assess the potential risk that known prison gang members pose to the officers and the public. Consider placing these offenders under intensive supervision, perhaps even team supervision. ♦

## Sacramento Intelligence Unit

The Sacramento Intelligence Unit (SIU) is a joint operation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), U.S. Marshals Service, and U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services. It was established in 1990 to provide operational intelligence and direct investigation support to officers and field employees of these agencies and other federal, state, and local law enforcement and judicial organizations.

SIU is hosted by the BOP Intelligence Section, Central Office, and staffed by employees from each of

the three agencies. While SIU puts special emphasis on street and prison gangs, it also provides intelligence on other threat groups who pose a danger to officers and the community.

Selected SIU services include preparation of intelligence summaries on gang or security threat groups, gang-related incident analysis, reports on intelligence trends, assistance in gang membership validation procedures, support in analyzing threats to the judiciary, notice to officers of pending releases, and publication of

a wide variety of bulletins, guides, and investigative support materials such as the *Security Threat Groups Symbols and Terminology Manual*.

SIU operates Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. (PST). For assistance or to order a copy of the *Security Threat Groups Symbols and Terminology Manual*, contact Walter Jeffery, Disruptive Groups Specialist, SIU, Suite 210, 2941 Sunrise Boulevard, Rancho Cordova, CA 95742; phone (916) 851-0204; fax (916) 851-0207.

# BOP Requires Citation of Gang Membership in Presentence and Dispositional Reports

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is reporting an increase in disruptive activities in prisons by prison gangs, street gangs, and other security threat groups. The Bureau is requesting that officers include gang affiliation information in presentence and dispositional reports.

The Administrative Office directs officers to include in their reports the name of the gang; the names of major gang members, including the defendant's or offender's associates or family members; the local chapter of the gang; the defendant's or offender's role in the gang; the length of the defendant's or offender's membership or association in the gang; and known gang identifiers, such as tattoos, colors, common terminology, hand signals, codes, and ciphers.

In a July 17, 1997, memorandum to chief probation officers regarding inclusion of gang information in presentence and dispositional reports, the Administrative Office noted that "Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 32(b)(4)(a) gener-

ally provides that the presentence report shall provide information about the history and characteristics of the defendant." This information includes any prior criminal record,

financial condition, and any circumstances affecting the defendant's behavior which may be helpful in imposing sentence or in subsequent correctional treatment . . . . Officers must take care in describing the reasons for including gang-related information in the presentence investigation or dispositional report since it may be relevant to the imposition of the sentence or subsequent correctional treatment, including designation by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. If the gang association can be attributed to the commission of the instant offense, such information should be included in the Offense Conduct Section of the report. If gang membership is not related to the offense, such information should be included in other relevant sections of the report . . . .

## References

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. "Inclusion of Gang Information in Presentence and Dispositional Reports" (memorandum to chief probation officers). Washington, D.C., July 17, 1997.

American Correctional Association. *Gangs in Correctional Facilities: A National Assessment*. Laurel, Md., April 1993.

California Department of Justice. *Gangs 2000: A Call to Action. The Attorney General's Report on the Impact of Criminal Street Gangs on Crime and Violence in California in the Year 2000*. Sacramento, Cal., March 1993.

Casillas, Victor A. "Identifying and Supervising Offenders Affiliated with Community Threat Groups." *Federal Probation* 58, no. 2 (June 1994): 11-19.

Federal Bureau of Prisons, Intelligence Section. *Sacramento Intelligence Unit:*

Read the AO's *News and Views* for announcements about the Center's October 1997 on-line workshop and December 1997 satellite broadcast on street gangs and other organized threat groups. Or contact Mark Maggio or Dennise Orlando-Morningstar at (202) 273-4115 for more information on the *Special Needs Offenders Series* on gangs.

*Executive Briefing Guide*. Washington, D.C., October 8, 1993.

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## Five Things You Can Do to Create Expertise on Prison Gangs in Your District

1. Establish partnerships and professional working relationships with Bureau of Prisons officials, state and local corrections officials, and local law enforcement to supplement knowledge and district resources.
2. Contact the Sacramento Intelligence Unit for a list of prison gang members who will be released from federal prison to your district. (See page 10.)
3. Work with management and colleagues to verify that district case-management practices sufficiently address the challenges prison gang members present.
4. Continually update your knowledge of prison gangs. Gang intelligence is constantly changing as gangs evolve, alliances are made and dissolve, and leaders rise and fall.
5. Take part in the Center's October on-line workshop and December satellite broadcast on street gangs and other organized threat groups. (Watch the AO's *News and Views* for announcements.)

## Special Needs Offenders Bulletin

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Written by  
Dennise Orlando-Morningstar  
Training Specialist  
Court Education Division

Edited and designed by  
Nathan Dotson  
Publications & Media Division

Send questions or comments to Dennise Orlando-Morningstar or Mark Maggio, Court Education Division, Federal Judicial Center, Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, One Columbus Circle, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-8003.

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From the end of 1985 to the middle of 1996, the federal inmate population grew an average of 9.5%. As of June 30, 1996, over 93,000 inmates were incarcerated in federal prisons. Records indicate that federal prisons were operating 25% above capacity by the end of 1996.

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Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building  
One Columbus Circle, N.E.  
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