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WHAT: The Biggest and Best Gang Training Conference — Gang College 2026.

When? — August 3rd, August 4th, August 5th, 2026

Where is it being held? — Westin Michigan Avenue Hotel, 909 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Why Attend? Read more inside this newspaper.

Who Should Attend: Anyone who is impacted by the gang problem, whatever your role, rank, or status in life. If you can be potentially enlisted in the fight against gangs, you are welcome. From municipal police officer gang specialist, to Security Threat Group (STG) Coordinator, to probation officer, or just someone who wants to learn a lot more about gangs and network with others nationwide.

How to Attend: A registration form is provided on page 16.

Massive Gang Training Conference Set for Summer in Chicago

CHICAGO, IL --- The National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) just announced plans for what promises to be the world’s biggest and best gang training conference ever. The NGCRC is good at delivering on its promises. It has over 28 years of previous experience doing this kind of training for police, prosecution, corrections, and related criminal justice agencies.

“Actually, the NGCRC has a longer track record, our journal alone now has thirty-three years of previous publication”, remarked Dr. George Knox, the executive director of the NGCRC, “this is our twenty-ninth continuous annual international training event, it is really a big event”.

Some call it going to gang college, as the NGCRC offers areas of specialization similar to “majors” in higher education. In 2025, the NGCRC’s conference offered over 100 different courses. Over 50 are already listed at the 2026 website.

“It’s true, we offer more choices than anyone, it really is a massive undertaking, and it has a very rigorous curriculum, and yes we plan to have at least 100 sessions to offer and maybe more for 2026,” Knox said.

Asked why it is always held in Chicago, NGCRC staff explained that Chicago was a central hub location and having so many different trainers that arrive from all over the U.S. and abroad made Chicago an affordable staging area, there are also reduced airline fares to Chicago, and of course many other attractions and amenities in Chicago.

The NGCRC will give away tickets to evening Cubs baseball games, and it has free networking receptions. It looks like another year of enjoying intensive classes during the day and going to baseball games and or networking events at night. Cubs are playing on Aug. 3 and Aug. 4, both evening games.

“Yes, of course, we do try to fill up the time schedule, if they are not learning in a formal way, we offer informal opportunities, and many different types of social networking events, like baseball or field training opportunities,” Knox replied, “we do try to intentionally create a warm, positive learning atmosphere for our trainees”.

“It is not just offering free tickets to evening baseball games, we simply try to make it an overall spectacular experience for people coming to Chicago, because for many of them, it is their first time in Chicago, and we like to go that extra mile to help them with whatever special interests they may have”, Knox said.

Asked what is so special about classroom learning and evening entertainment, Knox said “we provide the best gang training, we develop the curriculum that others want to mimic or copy, we are able to do this because we are in this field, we are practitioners, researchers, and producers of knowledge about gangs, we lead the field, and this year, yes, we intend to roll out some new innovations, you will see things not available anywhere else because we helped produce the knowledge — and it gets released for the first time at our conferences.”

“We can literally guarantee people they will achieve positive networking results at our conference, because we design the receptions and train our staff to be friendly and helpful,” Knox said “Funny, we keep hearing of how singles get married after attending our social mixers, I guess that’s a good thing”.

Why the NGCRC has continued to set the “Gold Standard” for Gang Training:

The National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) has pioneered the field by first of all being producers of gang knowledge, publishing and disseminating useful information recognized at the highest levels of the social scientific community. Additionally, the NGCRC has a long track record of service (1990 to present — 35 years of service) to law enforcement, prosecution, and correctional agencies nationwide in the goal of reducing gang violence. The research and intelligence analysis developed by the NGCRC over the years, and published in its scholarly journal, the *Journal of Gang Research* (now in its 33rd year of publication), is of great practical value for gang investigators in law enforcement and STG coordinators/investigators in the field of corrections. Gang prosecutors and gang investigators, throughout the USA and abroad, as well as police and correctional staff who attend the NGCRC training conferences, have clearly made their views known that the NGCRC training is the best in regard to offering high quality practical choices. A very wide variety of practical and useful courses are offered at the NGCRC training conference.

The NGCRC training conference is specifically designed to “train the trainer”: someone who completes the training will be able to return to their community, agency or institution equipped to train others. Trainees will return with a wealth of printed information, and lots of new “networking contacts”: persons to call upon in the future.

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Complete the New NGCRC
Word Seek and Get a Journal
Issue Free (\$75 value):

Complete the correct answers to the word
seekpuzzle to the right and, if you have all of the
correct answers, the NGCRC will send you, free
of charge, a valuable prize: one copy of a recent
issue of the *Journal of Gang Research*.

I have cut out this section of The Gang
Specialist newspaper, please send me a free and
complimentary copy of the *Journal of Gang
Research*.

Name:_____

Address:_____

City, ST, Zip:_____

Deadline for submission of entries: Clip out and mail original above. Complete and mail so that it is postmarked on or before February 28, 2026. Only one
entry per agency address. Mail to: NGCRC, P.O. Box 990, Peotone, IL 60468.

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“Hell’s Angels Use White Racist Gang to Steal Heavy Equipment Sold on Facebook
Marketplace”

CANTON, GA - - - Cherokee County District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway an-
nounced in October that, during a hearing on October 15, Cody Ryan Henderson, 40, of
Canton, entered a non-negotiated guilty plea to theft by deception, theft by receiving stolen
property, forgery in the first degree, identity fraud, and sale of a vehicle having an altered
vehicle identification number.

A non-negotiated plea occurs when the defendant admits guilt to the charges, and
both the prosecution and the defense counsel present sentencing recommendations and ar-
guments before the judge determines the sentence.

Charges stem from an investigation that began on November 4, 2024, when the
Cherokee Sheriff’s Office learned that a stolen 2023 John Deere skid steer loader had been
located at a Cherokee County storage facility and listed for sale on Facebook marketplace.
Detectives determined that the man in possession of the equipment was unaware that it had
been stolen. He had purchased it from another individual, later identified as Henderson,
who altered the serial number, used a false identify, and produced fraudulent documentation
to make the sale appear legitimate.

Using surveillance images and Flock camera technology, detectives identified
Henderson and located him in Michigan, where he had been arrested for other charges.

“The defendant told law enforcement that a member of Hells Angels would give
him ‘assignments’ to steal high-value vehicles using Ghostface Gangster members to con-
duct the thefts,” said Assistant District Attorney Pete Lamb, who prosecuted this case on
behalf of the District Attorney’s Office. “He admitted to stealing the John Deere skid steer,
removing its tracking chip, altering its VIN, and forging the bill of sale by using another
person’s identification.”

At the conclusion of the hearing, Superior Court Judge Tony Baker sentenced
Henderson to 35 years with the first 20 years to serve in prison. As a recidivist offender
under O.C.G.A. 17-10-7(a) and (c), Henderson must serve the entire prison term without the
possibility of parole. He was also ordered to have no contact of any kind with members or
associates of criminal street gangs.

“When a defendant repeatedly engages in criminal activity, particularly when that
individual has multiple prior felony convictions, a lengthy prison sentence is necessary,”
said District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. “This outcome reflects the serious consequences
that follow a continued pattern of criminal behavior and reinforces our commitment to pro-
tecting persons and property in the community.”

This case was investigated by the Cherokee Sheriff’s Office and prosecuted by
Assistant District Attorney Pete Lamb, Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial
Circuit.

“Nine Alleged Oakland SureZo Gang Members Charged With Racketeering Conspiracy
In Connection With Murders And Related Crimes”

OAKLAND, CA - - - A federal grand jury has indicted nine men on charges of
racketeering conspiracy in connection with two murders, three attempted murders, narcotics
and firearms distribution, and other related crimes allegedly perpetrated on behalf of two
Oakland-based Sureño street gangs.

The nine defendants, Marvin Bonilla, a/k/a “Malandro,” 24; Edwin Cano-Merida,
aka “Zombie,” 24; Cesar Rolando Lucas-Pablo, a/k/a “Lobo,” 28; Walfer Mendoza-Mendoza,
a/k/a “Shorty,” 31; Gonzalo Pablo, a/k/a “Chalo,” 25; Jeronimo “Orlando” Pablo-Carrillo, a/
k/a “Paisano,” 41; Mario Pablo-Matias, a/k/a “Chuco,” 24; Raymundo Pablo-Matias, a/k/a
“El Moch,” 31; and Carlos Ramiro-Mendoza, a/k/a “Minch,” 28, were charged in an indict-
ment filed October 9, 2025, and unsealed October 29.

Six of the nine defendants were arrested this morning in coordinated law enforce-
ment operations. Lucas-Pablo and Pablo-Carrillo were already in custody, and Gonzalo
Pablo remains at large. A number of the defendants are unlawfully residing in the United
States.

“Like people everywhere, the residents of Oakland deserve safe and peaceful neigh-
borhoods, not ones filled with fear and senseless violence. The Administration has made it
clear that enough is enough. This indictment charges nine members of the Oakland Sureños
for their roles in a dangerous criminal enterprise that inflicted harm throughout Oakland,”
said United States Attorney Craig H. Missakian. “My office will continue to partner with
local and federal law enforcement to reclaim our streets from the gangs who threaten our
residents. We could not have done this case without the involvement of many law enforce-
ment partners and, in particular, I would like to thank the FBI and the Oakland Police De-
partment for their excellent work.”

“The alleged criminal activity of these gang members has plagued Oakland’s neigh-
borhoods and put innocent residents at risk,” said FBI Acting Special Agent in Charge Matt
Cobo. “The FBI remains steadfast in our commitment to prioritize violent crime and eradi-
cate gang activity that threatens the safety and stability of our communities. While we con-
tinue to focus on disrupting the violent and illicit operations of local street gangs, today’s
arrests mark significant progress in that ongoing fight. The FBI and our law enforcement
partners will not allow violent gangs to operate with impunity or endanger the citizens we
are sworn to protect.”

“These individuals have caused lasting damage to our community for years,” said
Assistant Chief James Beere of the Oakland Police Department. “Their violent actions, in-
cluding shootings and homicides, have left families mourning and communities forever
changed. We are grateful for the efforts of our local law enforcement partners, the FBI, and
the U.S. Attorney’s Office, as we work together to seek justice for the victims and their
families.”

According to the indictment, the nine defendants were members of a racketeering
enterprise referred to in the indictment as the Oakland Sureños, a criminal street gang whose
members lived in and around Oakland, California. The Oakland Sureños were part of the
larger Sureños criminal street gang and, like the larger Sureños gang, generally recognized
the primacy of the Mexican Mafia prison gang. The larger Sureños gang was organized into
“cliques,” smaller groups that typically operated within specific territory.

In sum, each defendant is charged with one count of racketeering conspiracy, which
carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. In addition,
the indictment alleges that special sentencing factors apply to six defendants as follows:

The maximum statutory penalty applying to these violations is life in prison. Any
sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S.
Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18
U.S.C. § 3553.

Word Seek: Find the Gang Names on the Right

C L O O B P F S M E X I C A N M A F I A
Y Q R U N F I P T R E N D E A R A G U A
N Y D F L Q M I S D R O L E C I V G B S
O Z E T L O G R R E D C O M M A N D M A
A G P Z Y H Y C Y D Q P H D Z R P I J H
G A N G S T E R D I S C I P L E R R O C
R T A A K D V L M S Q P L O L B R Y H U
U R S S T S I N L I L A Z Z E U L V H R
O I O I U O C Z S S C G Q N S M C J E T
F N H J R D R O M O A D I S C F E G S A
X I C U C U N U S S G N I K N I T A L V
I T N I H E S A P N E A G R S G N P C L
S A A P R I N S S V N L J E B O M E V A
N R R U T O R E I D T O N P L S V K V S
E I S B S O A F M A O D R K J S E M F A
V O S T P M B A D R N O S T T X G A V R
E S R X J X M O Q V I V L C E Y P F X A
S A W E Y M O U T H D T O B H N U I C M
A I L I M A F A R T S E U N Z T O A D X
S D R O C E R N E D A L N I B B O S H M

Word Seek: Find the
Gang Names in the News:

BinLadenRecords
Bloods
Crips
FiveNineBrims
GangsterDisciple
HellsAngels
ISIS
LaCosaNostra
LatinKings
MaraSalvatrucha
MexicanMafia
Nortenos
NuestraFamilia
PuroTango
RanchoSanPedro
RedCommand
Russian Mafia
Russian Mob
SevenSixFour
Surenos
TrendeAragua
Trinitarios
VanowenStreetLocos
ViceLords
WeymouthDTO

“Former JBLM Sergeant Sentenced to Four Years in Prison for Delivering National Security Infor-
mation to China”

SEATTLE, WA - - - A former U.S. Army Sergeant whose last duty post was Joint Base Lewis-
McChord (JBLM) in western Washington was sentenced in October in U.S. District Court in Seattle to
four years in prison and three years of supervised release for two federal felonies, announced U.S. Attor-
ney Charles Neil Floyd. Joseph Daniel Schmidt, 31, pleaded guilty in June 2025 to attempt to deliver
national defense information and retention of national defense information. At the sentencing hearing
U.S. District Judge John C. Coughenour said he based his sentence on the seriousness of Schmidt’s crime
and on his mental health at the time of the conduct.

“As a retired Army officer, I find it unconscionable for a former soldier to put his colleagues
and country at risk by peddling secret information and intelligence access to a hostile foreign power,”
said U.S. Attorney Neil Floyd. “These cases remain a priority for our office to keep our country safe.”

“As a soldier, Mr. Schmidt swore an oath to protect the United States and its citizens who, in
turn, entrusted him with their security and the secrets necessary to defend it,” said W. Mike Herrington,
Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Seattle field office. “Instead of upholding that trust, he betrayed it by
handing over classified information to China, as his admissions make clear. The FBI and our partners will
remain vigilant in our mission to safeguard our nation, making every effort to uncover those who endan-
ger it and hold them accountable.”

According to records filed in the case, Schmidt was an active-duty soldier from January 2015
to January 2020. His primary assignment was at JBLM in the 109th Military Intelligence Battalion. In his
role, Schmidt had access to SECRET and TOP SECRET information. After his separation from the mili-
tary, Schmidt reached out to the Chinese Consulate in Turkey and later, the Chinese security services via
email offering national defense information.

In March 2020, Schmidt traveled to Hong Kong and continued his efforts to provide Chinese
intelligence with classified information he obtained from his military service. He created multiple lengthy
documents describing various “high level secrets” he was offering to the Chinese government. He re-
tained a device that allows for access to secure military computer networks and offered the device to
Chinese authorities to assist them in efforts to gain access to such networks. Just 17 days after he made
the approach to the Chinese intelligence contacts, he was granted a long sought-after work visa for China.

Schmidt remained in China, primarily Hong Kong, until October 2023, when he flew to San
Francisco. He was arrested at the airport.

Speaking in court today, Assistant United States Attorney Todd Greenberg said Schmidt “cre-
ated documents based on classified and national defense information. He used his training to provide
sensitive information to the Chinese security service. He knew what he was doing was wrong – he was
doing web searches for such things as ‘Can you be extradited for treason.’”

The FBI investigated the case, with valuable assistance provided by the U.S. Army Counterin-
telligence Command.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Todd Greenberg prosecuted the case.

“FBI Announces Major Violent Gang Takedown in Southeastern Wisconsin”

MILWAUKEE, WI - - - FBI Milwaukee announced on October 22 the results of “Operation
Chalkline,” a long-term multi-year criminal enterprise investigation that targeted a violent street gang
operating in Milwaukee and Racine with direct connections to a major international cartel.

FBI Milwaukee special agents and task force officers (TFOs) arrested 22 subjects on federal
charges and executed 24 federal search warrants alongside local, state, and federal partners. The in-
vestigation resulted in the seizure of more than four kilograms of cocaine, 260 grams of fentanyl, 1.5 pounds
of methamphetamines, six pounds of marijuana, 23 firearms, and three vehicles.

The investigation was led by a Mount Pleasant Police Department TFO as part of the FBI
Milwaukee Area Safe Streets Task Force, which included TFOs from the Caledonia Police Department,
Mount Pleasant Police Department, Racine County Sheriff’s Office, and Racine Police Department.

Additional local, state, and federal law enforcement partners assisted in the operation, which
included the utilization of 14 SWAT teams. These partners included the Cudahy Police Department,
Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office, Milwaukee Police Department, Oak Creek Police Department, West
Allis Police Department, Wisconsin Department of Justice - Division of Criminal Investigation, Wiscon-
sin State Patrol, ATF, DEA, FBI, HSI, and the U.S. Marshals Service.

FBI Milwaukee continues to prioritize crushing violent crime together with our law enforce-
ment partners to ensure public safety and security in Milwaukee, Racine, and throughout the state of
Wisconsin.

FBI Milwaukee would like to thank the agencies and partners that supported Operation
Chalkline. Citizens are encouraged to report crime in their communities by calling local police or 1-800-
CALL-FBI or by submitting tips online at tips.fbi.gov. If an emergency response is required, please call
911.

“Suspected Tren de Aragua Member Pleads Guilty to Illegal Firearms Possession”

ALBUQUERQUE – A Venezuelan national and suspected member of a transnational criminal
organization has pleaded guilty in October to illegally possessing firearms and conspiring to destroy
evidence after posting photos and videos of himself with weapons on social media.

According to court documents, Cristhian Ortega-Lopez, 23, a Venezuelan national, illegally
entered the United States on December 15, 2023, and was released pending removal proceedings. In
January 2025, Homeland Security Investigations received an anonymous tip that Ortega-Lopez, a sus-
pected member of the Tren de Aragua transnational criminal organization and U.S.-designated Foreign
Terrorist Organization, was living in Las Cruces and in possession of firearms.

Ortega-Lopez posted numerous photos and videos to his Facebook and TikTok accounts show-
ing him handling, displaying, and shooting various firearms at a Las Cruces shooting range and other
locations. On December 24, 2024, Ortega-Lopez posted photos and videos of himself at the residence of
April Cano, a social media influencer and gun enthusiast, holding a rifle with tactical equipment while
wearing a ballistic helmet with night vision goggles. In the videos, Ortega-Lopez referred to April Cano’s
parents, Nancy and Jose Cano, as “Patron” and “Patrona,” and told an informant he had received a
firearm as a Christmas gift from the Cano family.

Ortega-Lopez worked for the Cano family and received housing in return. Additionally, the
Cano family took Ortega-Lopez to the shooting range to fire weapons and allowed him access to fire-
arms.

On February 28, 2025, agents executed search warrants and seized four firearms from April
Cano’s residence. During a post-Miranda interview, Ortega-Lopez admitted he recognized all four fire-
arms and knew it was illegal for him to possess them. On April 20, 2025, Ortega-Lopez conspired with
another person to destroy his Facebook account to avoid the contents being used against him at trial.

Nancy and Jose Cano were indicted this week on charges related to tampering with evidence.
Nancy Cano faces charges of conspiracy to tamper with evidence, while Jose Cano is charged with both
conspiracy to tamper with evidence and tampering with evidence. Both remain on conditions of release
pending trial, which has not been scheduled.

“31 Defendants, Including Members and Associates of Organized Crime Families and National Basketball Association Coach Chauncey Billups, Charged in Schemes to Rig Illegal Poker Games”

BROOKLYN, NY - - - On October 23, at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, a seven-count indictment was unsealed charging 31 defendants in criminal schemes to rig illegal poker games at various locations in New York City, East Hampton, New York, and throughout the United States. This morning, 31 defendants were arrested in 11 states, including members and associates of the Bonanno, Gambino, and Genovese organized crime families of La Cosa Nostra (LCN); Chauncey Billups, head coach of the Portland Trail Blazers of the National Basketball Association (NBA); and Damon Jones, also known as “Dee,” a former NBA player with the Cleveland Cavaliers and Miami Heat. The defendants will make initial court appearances this afternoon at federal courthouses throughout the United States, including the Eastern District of New York.

Joseph Nocella, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; Kash Patel, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Christopher G. Raia, Assistant Director in Charge, FBI, New York Field Office (FBI); Ricky J. Patel, Special Agent in Charge, Homeland Security Investigations, New York (HSI); Jessica S. Tisch, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD); and Phoebe S. Sorial, Executive Director, New York Waterfront Commission, announced the arrests and charges.

“As alleged, members and associates of organized crime families fixed illegal poker games as part of a highly sophisticated and lucrative fraud scheme to cheat victims out of millions of dollars and conspired with others to perpetrate their frauds,” stated United States Attorney Nocella. “Well-known former NBA players and former professional athletes, acted as ‘Face Cards’ to lure unsuspecting victims to high-stakes poker games, where they were then at the mercy of concealed technology, including rigged shuffling machines and specially designed contacts lenses and sunglasses to read the backs of playing cards, which ensured that the victims would lose big. The indictment and arrests sounds the final buzzer for these cheaters.”

Mr. Nocella also thanked Homeland Security Investigations Newark for their valuable contribution to the case.

“Today over 30 people were arrested and charged for their alleged roles in criminal schemes to rig illegal poker games to win large amounts of money. These individuals used technology and deceit to scam innocent victims out of millions of dollars – eventually funneling money to La Cosa Nostra and enriching one of the most notorious criminal networks in the world,” stated FBI Director Patel. “This investigation spanned 9 states and FBI offices, and I want to thank the men and women of the FBI for their tremendous work and dedication rooting out those actors responsible. This FBI will never stop following the money to pursue and find those who break our laws.”

“Using the allure of high-stakes winnings and the promise to play alongside well-known professional athletes, these defendants allegedly defrauded unwitting victims out of tens of millions of dollars and established a financial pipeline to La Cosa Nostra,” stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Raia. “This alleged scheme wreaked havoc across the nation, exploiting the notoriety of some and the wallets of others to finance the Italian crime families. Our office maintains its aggressive pursuit of any Italian organized crime operating in our jurisdiction and will continue to stem all unlawful revenue streams fueling their illicit activity.”

“With the alleged involvement of three La Cosa Nostra crime families, an NBA head coach and Hall of Famer, as well as other current and former professional athletes, the investigative work that culminated with this morning’s operation are reminiscent of a Hollywood movie. But this was not luck, and it was not theatrics,” stated HSI New York Special Agent in Charge Patel. “Over four years ago, HSI New York uncovered the operation and worked tirelessly with HSI Newark, the FBI, the New York Waterfront Commission, and the NYPD to expose crimes that defrauded victims of at least \$7 million dollars and included violent robberies. I commend all agencies and personnel involved in today’s sweeping arrests, which should serve as a testament to our relentless, evidence-driven and unified effort.”

“For years, these individuals allegedly hosted illegal poker games where they used sophisticated technology and enlisted current and former NBA players to cheat people out of millions of dollars,” stated NYPD Commissioner Tisch. “This complex scheme was so far reaching that it included members from four of the organized crime families, and when people refused to pay because they were cheated, these defendants did what organized crime has always done: they used threats, intimidation, and violence. I want to thank the incredible team at the NYPD that worked diligently on this case, and our partners in the FBI, HSI, and the U.S Attorney’s Office for their collaboration in shutting down this illegal gambling ring.”

“Today’s indictment represents a concerted effort to combat traditional organized crime, which continues to plague our communities,” stated Waterfront Commission Executive Director Sorial. “The arrests of members from three La Cosa Nostra crime families is a stark reminder that they are not averse to working together to advance their sophisticated schemes when it serves their interest. Disruption of their illegal gambling proceeds weakens their grip on our region, particularly in the Port of New York where they have long held influence. The New York Waterfront Commission, in close coordination with its federal, state and local law enforcement partners, remains unwavering in its commitment to dismantle these criminal enterprises by severing the illicit revenue streams that sustain them.”

As alleged in the indictment, beginning as early as 2019, the defendants engaged in a series of schemes to use wireless cheating technology to rig illegal poker games (most commonly, Texas Hold’em) in the Eastern District of New York and across the United States. Co-conspirators in the scheme included game organizers, who arranged for unwitting victims to play in underground illegal poker games that were secretly rigged; suppliers of the rigged cheating technology; former professional athletes, who were enlisted as “Face Cards” in the scheme to entice the victims’ participation in the games; cheating teams who worked together using the cheating technology to defraud the victims; money launderers; and members and associates of the Bonanno, Gambino, and Genovese organized crime families of LCN, who backed games in the New York area and took a percentage of the crime proceeds from those games. LCN members and associates had a foothold in the rigged poker scheme because they had preexisting control over “straight” (i.e., non-rigged) illegal poker games in New York City, where some of the rigged poker games also occurred: one that was hosted principally at Lexington Avenue in Manhattan, that was on record with the Bonanno family (the “Lexington Avenue Game”); and a second that was hosted principally at Washington Place in Manhattan, that was on record with the Gambino family (the “Washington Place Game”). As part of the schemes, some of the charged defendants and other co-conspirators also committed acts of violence, including the robbery and extortions charged in the indictment.

In a typical legitimate poker game, a dealer uses a shuffling machine to shuffle the cards randomly before dealing them to all the players in a particular order. As set forth in the indictment, the rigged games used altered shuffling machines that contained hidden technology allowing the machines to read all the cards in the deck. Because the cards were always dealt in a particular order to the players at the table, the machines could determine which player would have the winning hand. This information was transmitted to an off-site member of the conspiracy, who then transmitted that information via cellphone back to a member of the conspiracy who was playing at the table, referred to as the “Quarterback” or “Driver.” The Quarterback then secretly signaled this information (usually by prearranged signals like touching certain chips or other items on the table) to other co-conspirators playing at the table, who were also participants in the scheme. Collectively, the Quarterback and other players in on the scheme (i.e., the cheating team) used this information to win poker games against unwitting victims, who sometimes lost tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars at a time. The defendants used other cheating technology as well, such as a chip tray analyzer (essentially, a poker chip tray that also secretly read all cards using hidden cameras), an x-ray table that could read cards face down on the table, and special contact lenses or eyeglasses that could read pre-marked cards.

The defendants and their co-conspirators bet accordingly to ensure that the unsuspecting victims lost money. Through the rigged poker schemes, the defendants caused losses to victims of at least \$7 million.

As alleged, members of the conspiracy fulfilled different roles to ensure the schemes’ success. The defendants Tony Goodson, Shane Hennen, Curtis Meeks, and Robert Stroud supplied the cheating technology. The defendants Ammar Awawdeh, Saul Becher, John Gallo, Zhen Hu, Stroud, and Seth Trustman organized the rigged games. Members of the cheating teams included the defendants Nelson Alvarez, Louis Apicella, Chauncey Billups, Eric Earnest, Marco Garzon, Jamie Gilet, Tony Goodson, Kenny Han, Hennen, Horatio Hu, Damon Jones, John Mazzola, Nicholas Minucci, Michael Renzulli, Angelo Ruggiero, Jr., Stroud, Trustman, and Sophia Wei. In addition, the defendant Anthony Shnayderman, among others, laundered the proceeds of the schemes. For example, game organizers sometimes directed victims to send money via bank wires to shell companies controlled by Shnayderman, who then transferred money (either in cash or cryptocurrency), less a money laundering fee, back to the game organizers.

As alleged in the indictment, the Bonanno, Genovese, and Gambino organized crime families of LCN backed the Lexington Avenue Game and the Washington Place Game and received a portion of the criminal proceeds from both the “straight” illegal poker games and rigged games run by the organizers of those games. In particular, Becher, Zhen Hu, and Trustman—the organizers of the Lexington Avenue Game—were required to make payments

2026 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPTIONS:

Trainees can register for Non-Certification or they can register for Certification. Both of these registration options are explained below.

Non-Certification: This option is for those who do not need a transcript to be maintained of their training experience and who do not desire a high quality certificate in an upward path of gang specialist training. This option is best for those who just want to attend, get the training materials, and be free to come and go as they wish. Trainees are eligible to receive 24 hours of on-site training during the conference. Please note that if you register for non-certification you do not receive any certificates of your training. Non-certification trainees do receive the same high quality set of take home training materials as those who register for Certification. Persons registering for non-certification are allowed to “upgrade” their registration to Certification; please inquire in writing about this procedure.

Certification: The certification is provided by the National Gang Crime Research Center, the premier gang research organization in the world, founded in 1990 it publishes the only professional international refereed journal about gangs (the *Journal of Gang Research*), it does extensive research on gangs, and it has a strong positive track record for providing high quality training on gang issues. The *Journal of Gang Research* has over 30 years of gang research publishing experience and as the Official Publication of the NGCRC it is abstracted in the Psychological Abstracts, **Criminal Justice Abstracts**, Sociological Abstracts, Social Service Abstracts, and other international organizations that recognize professional journals. For more information about the accomplishments of the NGCRC, see its webpage information (www.ngcrc.com). The NGCRC was given much positive attention in the November/December 2002 (No. 67) National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) Catalog, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs as a source of useful information on gangs (pp. 15, 17; this is not “advertising”, because the NGCRC reports it recommended at our Web site were not government-funded and the NGCRC is not government funded, thus it is simply achieved positive recognition.

There are a number of different choices for a person seeking certification. You must select ONE of these areas of specialization for your own designated track when you register for certification. The list of the 30 choices are listed at the left: “Training Tracks for 2026”.

When you register for certification, you select one “track” as your primary interest area. Your “track” is like your “major” in college. You must spend at least four hours in sessions designated for your “track”. The other 20 hours of training are “electives”: spend that time in any session you want to attend.

When you register for certification you receive two professionally printed color certificates of high display quality reflecting your training. One of these certificates reflects the completion of the 2026 Training Program; and the second certificate reflects your specialized training in your chosen track area. Those registering for non-certification do not receive such certificates.

THE TRAINING SITE: The Westin Michigan Avenue Hotel

This hotel is in a classy part of the north Loop. It is situated in the “Gold Coast” area of north Michigan Avenue (the shopping district) by Chicago’s Water Tower. The “Water Tower” is Chicago’s famous landmark. The Westin Hotel is known as a favorite hotel for sports celebrities when they stay in Chicago. It is easy to get to, conveniently located, well known, and has many amenities to offer. It has scored favorably in the annual evaluations the NGCRC has conducted as well (the Conference Evaluation Form asks attendees to evaluate a lot of things, including the experience with hotel).

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS:

The site where the training is occurring is the Westin Michigan Avenue Chicago hotel. It is a hotel that continues to get very high ratings from conference attendees.

The Westin Michigan Avenue is located at 909 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611. The Telephone number for the Westin Michigan Avenue Hotel is (312) 943-7200. The toll free number for the Central Reservations Call Center is: 1 (888) 627-8385. When making reservations, the “code” for the conference is “NGCRC Gang Conference”. They need that “code” to give you the reduced hotel rates.

The cut-off date for getting the rates here is July 13, 2026: Singles \$224.

Trainees will, as in past NGCRC training conferences, be able to pick up their “goody bags” the evening before training begins. Opening Ceremony is 0700 Monday in the Chicago Ballroom; actual Training begins 8am Monday morning, August 3, 202666. However, you will be able to pick up your registration materials, your Identification Badge, the final schedule, and your “goody bag” the night before: we expect to be able to start giving out registration materials about 3pm on Sunday, 2 August 2026. We will be open to provide this service until about 10:00 pm. Just go the the NGCRC Operations Center (The Garfield Park Room is the NGCRC Operations Center) to pick up your materials. Signs will be prominently displayed.

Should you have any problem getting a reservation, feel free to call the NGCRC

2026 Conference Hot Line: (708) 258-9111.

Sometimes people may be told “all the rooms are gone”, when in fact, it is simply a matter of allocating an additional number of rooms.

So, if you have any issues, call us. Maybe we can help. We certainly have a liaison at the hotel we can talk to.

La Cosa Nostra story continued:

to defendants Ernest Aiello, Julius Ziliani, and Thomas Gelardo of the Bonanno family for the games (rigged or “straight”) that they operated. Similarly, Awawdeh and John Gallo—organizers of the Washington Place Game—were required to make payments to the defendants Lee Fama, Joseph Lanni, and Ruggiero of the Gambino family and to the defendant Matthew Daddino of the Genovese crime for the games (rigged or “straight”) that they operated. For a period in 2023, the two games merged and were jointly operated. During that period, all three organized crime families received proceeds from the rigged and illegal poker games.

As charged in the indictment, members of the conspiracy committed violent acts, including assault, extortions, and robbery, in furtherance of the schemes to ensure the repayment of debts and continued success of the operation. Between November 2022 and February 2023, Gelardo, Zhen Hu and Ziliani extorted John Doe #5 to secure the repayment of a gambling debt. Among other things, Zhen Hu and Gelardo both punched the victim to get him to pay back the debt. In September 2023 and October 2023, Becher, Zhen Hu and Trustman extorted another victim by threatening him to pay back a debt from illegal poker games. On September 7, 2023, Awawdeh, Hoti, Mazzola, Minucci, and Stroud arranged and committed a gunpoint robbery of a co-conspirator to steal a rigged shuffler machine that the defendants wanted to use.

Bettors who were defrauded in the rigged games may be victims under the Mandatory Victims Restitution Act. If you believe you were a victim of the scheme, please contact 1-800-CALLFBI.

The charges in the indictments are allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The government’s case is being handled by Office’s Organized Crime and Gangs Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Michael W. Gibaldi, Irisa Chen, and Sean M. Sherman are in charge of the prosecution with the assistance of Paralegal Specialists John Schneider and Marlane Bosler. Assistant United States Attorney Michael Castiglione of the Office’s Asset Recovery Section is handling forfeiture matters.

“Former Alabama Department of Corrections Officer Sentenced to Prison for Bribery”

HUNTSVILLE, AL - - - A former Alabama Department of Corrections Officer has been sentenced for bribery, announced U.S. Attorney Prim Escalona.

U.S. District Judge Liles C. Burke sentenced John Paul Ketteman, 28, of Huntsville, to 15 months in prison for receipt of a bribe by an agent of an organization receiving federal funds.

According to the plea agreement, Ketteman was employed as a corrections officer at the Alabama Department of Correction’s Limestone Correctional Facility in Harvest, Alabama. Ketteman’s job duties included inspecting prison cells for contraband and supervising inmates. In the Fall of 2022, ADOC’s Law Enforcement Services Division began an investigation into contraband being smuggled into the Limestone Facility by corrections officers. As part of the investigation, Cash App records were obtained for Ketteman’s account. These records revealed that in less than three months in 2022, Ketteman was paid more than \$10,000 to smuggle contraband into the Limestone Facility and to act as a lookout.

BASEBALL NETWORKING EVENTS

We are purchasing tickets to the Monday night, 7:05 pm, August 3rd, 2026, baseball game where the Chicago Cubs are hosting the Cincinnati Reds. We also have tickets to the Tuesday night baseball game (7:05pm August 4th, 2026) where the Chicago Cubs are hosting the Cincinnati Reds. This should be a memory-making and exciting baseball experience. These tickets are available free to those registered for Certification or Non-Certification, one per person on a first come, first served basis.

We suggest you take the train to the Wrigley Field ball park. The CTA train is cheap, fast. Please note: transportation to and from the game from the hotel is not provided by the NGCRC. You simply need to call or visit the website (www.transitchicago.com) for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and you will find there is very cheap transportation by train or bus. Our advice: buy a round-trip CTA train ticket. Its very cheap, and the fastest way to and from the ball park.

Your ticket will be mailed directly to you (well before the conference). So do not lose the ticket, we cannot replace it if it is lost or destroyed. We will announce at this website location when we start mailing tickets. These tickets while paid for by the NGCRC are being distributed free of charge to officially registered trainees to enhance their social networking experience at the NGCRC training conference. We truly ask that you not exploit this by requesting a ticket and then trying to sell it: because whoever gets the ticket will have to sit with a lot of gang specialists. If you request a ticket, and if we provide you one, and you change your mind about attending this networking event: no problem, just return your ticket at anytime to the NGCRC.

Please watch the NGCRC website for notification of the exact date when the NGCRC will begin mailing out tickets to those who request a ticket one of the Baseball Social Networking events. You will be given electronic tickets sent directly from MLB to your email address. Refer to our advice at the official conference website: https://ngcrc.com/conference.html

The “Added Value” of NGCRC Training:

The added value of NGCRC training is easy to explain and it is designed to be different than other groups who sponsor such training conferences: you get more for your money. You see that reflected in the evaluation results from previous NGCRC Conferences. Other people “copy” what we do, or they try to. But you can do a quick check of facts here: who else offers as many different sessions or courses than the NGCRC? It is such a huge and massive undertaking, that persons who attend this conference benefit from the very factor of “diversity” in the choices they have — what they want to learn, what instructors they want to learn from, etc

First, all NGCRC trainees are given a **wealth of high-quality take home printed training materials**. The value of these books, reflecting the official books and journals from the NGCRC and related topics of interest about gangs, is itself a value comparable to the price of training itself. Most gang training programs provide a small amount of take-home written training materials, while the NGCRC provides an abundance of high-quality written take-home training materials. All persons attending the conference receive a “bag of goodies” which includes these kinds of useful written take-home training materials.

Secondly, no other training organization in the world provides the large **variety of training options** that the NGCRC provides; the NGCRC brings in more trainers and provides, therefore, more “choices” to trainees. NGCRC provides a large professional training experience in an environment designed for training. For example in the 2026 Conference there will be over one hundred different sessions to pick from. Typically, gang conferences offer a small selection of training options. So if you think a variety of choices is a good thing, then you need to attend our training conference.

Thirdly, the NGCRC training is **designed to produce “trainers”**: trainees who attend and complete the training typically return to their respective jurisdictions with an incredible new arsenal of training tools to train others in the field. You will get new and useful gang information at our 2026 Training Conference.

Fourthly, the NGCRC training includes **social opportunities** that are structured to enhance the ability of the trainee to **network with others** in the field at a national and international level.

A Peek at the 2026 Goody Bag

The NGCRC always hands out one free “goody bag” to everyone registered for the conference. This includes the program listing of courses, listing the room locations, the dates, the time, etc for each of the courses or sessions being offered. This will include four (4) copies of recent issues of the *Journal of Gang Research*, a value of \$300 when purchased as back issues. The 2026 Goody Bag will also include valuable and useful items useful for your educational enhancement. So, the goody bag alone has \$300+ in valued gang training publications and other useful educational materials.

To learn more about the *Journal of Gang Research*, go to: www.ngcrc.com/ngcrc/page2.htm

“Arizona Leader of Violent Extremist Network ‘764’ Charged with Running a Child Exploitation Enterprise, Supporting Terrorists, Producing and Distributing Child Pornography, and Other Crimes”

PHOENIX, AZ - - - A federal grand jury in the District of Arizona in October returned a 29-count superseding indictment against Baron Cain Martin, known online as “Convict” (among other monikers), 21, of Tucson, Arizona. The superseding indictment charges Martin with participating in a child exploitation enterprise, conspiring to provide material support to terrorists, conspiring to kill, kidnap or maim persons in a foreign country, producing child pornography (five counts), distributing child pornography (11 counts), coercing and enticing minors to engage in sexual activity (three counts), cyberstalking (three counts), animal crushing and distribution of animal crush videos, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Martin has been in federal custody since his arrest on federal charges on December 11, 2024.

“This man’s alleged crimes are unthinkable depraved and reflect the horrific danger of 764 — if convicted, he will face severe consequences as we work to dismantle this evil network,” said Attorney General Pamela Bondi. “I urge parents to remain vigilant about the threats their children face online.”

“Martin is charged with conspiring to provide material support to terrorists, participating in a child exploitation enterprise, and producing child pornography, among many others,” said FBI Director Patel. “His actions as a leader of this criminal network were so atrocious and extreme that he is charged with supporting terrorism. It’s alleged that Martin not only committed these crimes but wrote and posted a guide for others to use to identify, groom, and extort their own victims. The FBI will not stop until we find those who perpetrate these horrific crimes that prey on the most vulnerable members of our communities.”

“Martin stands accused of engaging in conduct specifically intended to inflict pain, spread fear, and destroy innocence,” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John A. Eisenberg. “His alleged actions targeting children as part of the 764 online terror network are so depraved they defy comprehension. We will use every available tool to protect our children and ensure that those who perpetrate such acts of pure evil face the full force of justice.”

“The defendant’s alleged actions in this case are an assault on the basic foundations of human decency,” U.S. Attorney Timothy Courchaine stated. “While cowardly hiding his identity behind a screen and a moniker, Mr. Martin preyed upon vulnerable victims while promoting some of the sickest forms of human depravity. It is an honor for the dedicated men and women of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the District of Arizona to fight against this nihilistic violence by bringing the full weight of American justice against its proponents.”

According to court documents, Martin is a member and leader of “764,” a criminal organization of Nihilistic Violent Extremists (NVEs) operating within the United States and abroad. Those involved with the 764 network methodically target vulnerable, underage populations by using social media to encourage the possession, production, and sharing of extreme gore media and child sexual abuse material (CSAM). Members of 764 seek to desensitize young people to violence and break down societal norms regarding violence. They normalize the possession, production, and sharing of explicit CSAM and gore material to corrupt and groom their victims toward future violence, gain notoriety among other members of the network, and spread fear for the purpose of accelerating chaos under the 764 ideology with an aim toward the disruption of society.

The superseding indictment alleges that, since approximately 2019, Martin, using his online moniker “Convict,” has been a participant and administrator in 764 chatrooms, has coerced multiple victims into creating child pornography, extortion videos, and animal crushing videos. Martin also wrote a detailed guide that was posted online detailing how to identify, groom, and extort vulnerable juveniles, and advised readers to target victims struggling with mental health.

The superseding indictment accuses Martin of providing material support to terrorists by providing himself as personnel, services, and expert advice or assistance to carry out a conspiracy to kill or maim a person in a foreign country. In furtherance of the conspiracy to provide material support, the superseding indictment alleges that in September 2022, Martin conspired with others to coerce and direct a victim living outside the United States to self-harm, self-maim, and self-kill.

In addition to the terrorism and conspiracy to kill or maim a person in a foreign country, the superseding indictment accuses Martin of using wire communications in a conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire and of conspiring to commit wire fraud.

Martin is also accused of engaging in a child exploitation enterprise during which he produced and distributed child pornography. The superseding indictment also includes five separate counts of production of child pornography, eleven counts of distribution of child pornography, and three counts relating to the coercion and enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity. In total, the superseding indictment alleges Martin victimized at least nine victims. Eight of Martin’s victims were minors at the time he committed the offenses and their ages were between the ages of 11 and 15 years old.

Martin is alleged to have also engaged in animal crushing and of distributing animal crush videos to 764 members. He is accused of cyberstalking three separate victims, two of whom were minors at the time of the offenses.

If convicted, Martin faces a penalty of up to life in prison for each count that accuses him of participating in a child exploitation enterprise, conspiracy to kill, kidnap or maim persons in a foreign country, and coercion and enticement of a child; 30 years in prison for each count of production of child pornography, and 15 years for providing material support to terrorists; up to 20 years in prison for cyberstalking resulting in permanent disfigurement or bodily injury and wire fraud conspiracy; and 10 years in prison for cyberstalking a minor and use of interstate commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire. Martin also faces mandatory minimum sentences of 20 years for the child exploitation enterprise, 15 years for production of child pornography, and 5 years for distribution of child pornography for each applicable count. Each offense also carries a fine of up to \$250,000 and up to a lifetime of supervised release. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

“Six Alleged “Unknown Vice Lord Gang” Members Indicted for Attempted Murder in aid of Racketeering and Firearm Charges”

MEMPHIS, TN - - - A nine-count indictment was unsealed in the Western District of Tennessee charging six alleged members of a criminal street gang known as Unknown Vice Lords (UVL) – Ghost Mob with conspiracy to commit murder, attempted murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, and firearms violations.

“As alleged, these individuals showed a blatant disregard for public safety, engaging in a retaliatory gang shooting in a residential neighborhood,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew R. Galeotti of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “Gang violence inflicts profound harm on our communities, fostering fear, destabilizing neighborhoods, and damaging the quality of life for law-abiding residents. The arrest of these violent gang members underscores the Justice Department’s unwavering commitment to protecting public safety and the rule of law. We will continue to dismantle these criminal organizations and protect the safety and security of our citizens.”

“The premeditated and horrendous acts of violence that these gang members committed demonstrates a blatant disregard for human life,” said Special Agent in Charge Jamey VanVliet of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Nashville Field Division. “The men and women of the ATF, along with our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners, remain committed to combatting violent crime and swiftly bringing these individuals to justice before they commit other senseless acts of violence.”

According to court documents, the UVL Ghost Mob is a violent, criminal street gang that operates throughout the Western District of Tennessee and elsewhere. The UVL Ghost Mob is a subset of the Almighty Vice Lord Nation, which originated in Chicago and eventually spread to other parts of the United States, including Tennessee.

Court documents allege that on Sept. 6, 2020, after rival gang members opened fire on UVL Ghost Mob members and their families, injuring four people, UVL Ghost Mob leaders ordered a retaliatory attack. Shortly after midnight on Sept. 7, 2020, the defendants travelled to the residence of the rival gang members, armed with assault style rifles and wearing masks and gloves. The defendants intentionally shot approximately 40-50 bullets into the residence while the rival gang members were inside. Neighborhood security cameras captured the shooting. In the video, the defendants are depicted using, carrying, and firing multiple firearms into the residence.

The following defendants were charged for their role in the offense: Antwon Brown, also known as Yayo, 32 of Memphis, Tennessee; Cordera Douglas, also known as Chuckie Dee, 36 of Memphis, Tennessee; Willie Merriweather, 41 of Antioch, Tennessee; Tevin Richardson, also known as Santana, 34 of Memphis, Tennessee; Ricky Rogers, Jr., also known as Double R, RR, 32 of Memphis, Tennessee; and Laraveus Williams, also known as Ray Ray, 32 of Memphis, Tennessee.

Assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering carries a maximum penalty of 20 years’ imprisonment. Conspiracy to commit murder and attempted murder in aid of racketeering carries a maximum sentence of 10 years’ imprisonment. The charge of discharging a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence carries a mandatory sentence of at least 10 years consecutive to any other sentence. If convicted, a federal district judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The ATF and Memphis Police Department investigated the case.

“Abdulrahman El Bahnasawy Committed Assault While Serving Sentence for Plotting a Terrorist Attack on New York City”

NEW YORK, NY - - - The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania and the National Security Division of the Department of Justice announced in November that Abdulrahman El Bahnasawy, 27, of Ontario, Canada, pleaded guilty to offenses related to a 2020 attack on correctional officers at the United State Penitentiary Allenwood.

According to United States Attorney Brian D. Miller and Assistant Attorney General for National Security John A. Eisenberg, Bahnasawy was an inmate at USP Allenwood who, on December 7, 2020, attacked two corrections officers using a weapon made from part of a steel desk in his cell. Bahnasawy stabbed one officer in the head and face, and, when a second responded to assist, Bahnasawy stabbed her in the hand.

The first officer eventually lost his right eye as a result of the attack. When Bahnasawy was restrained, a note was found in his sock that read, “This is a terrorist attack for the Islamic State.” A pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) was also found taped to the inside of a locker door in Bahnasawy’s prison cell. Today, Bahnasawy pleaded guilty to multiple counts of assault, assault with intent to commit murder and possession of contraband inside a prison, as well as providing material support to ISIS, a designated foreign terrorist organization.

At the time of the attacks at USP Allenwood, Bahnasawy was serving a sentence for his role in plotting a mass-casualty terrorist attack in New York City on behalf of ISIS. Bahnasawy, a then-20-year-old Canadian citizen and resident, plotted with Talha Haroon and Russell Salic to conduct bombings and shootings in heavily populated areas of New York City during the Islamic holy month of Ramadhan in 2016, all in the name of ISIS.

An undercover FBI agent (UC) infiltrated the co-conspirators’ terrorist plot, posing as an ISIS supporter prepared to join in the attacks. The FBI arrested Bahnasawy in May 2016 after he traveled from Canada to the New York City area in preparation for the attacks, and he has been in custody since that time.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Geoffrey MacArthur and Counterterrorism Section Trial Attorney Jessica L. Joyce prosecuted this case.

The maximum penalty under federal law for these offenses is 130 years of imprisonment, a term of supervised release following imprisonment, and a fine.

A sentence following a finding of guilt is imposed by the Judge after consideration of the applicable federal sentencing statutes and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines.

**WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND THE 2026
NGCRC TRAINING CONFERENCE:**

You have the power to “choose” what you want to learn. You have the right to “major in” what area of specialization or concentration you are interested in. Our conference provides an incredible array of different professional gang training sessions that trainees can make up their own minds what they want to attend. This is not the “one size fits all” model of training where every trainee attends each of a small limited number of training sessions and every trainer works all day to give the same talk three or four times. Our training program provides what we think people really want: the freedom to choose what kind of training they want from an incredible array of diverse choices. If you wanted a “Crash Course” on gangs, then this would be it. If you needed to sharpen up on certain gang topics, then this would be the training for you.

There has never been a gang training conference where people can “specialize” in a wide variety of areas of expertise. So the 2026 NGCRC Gang Training Conference really is a “history making event”. It allows persons to network with others in their special area of interests and it has the organizational strength of much diversity among the trainers. It also has curriculum materials that are truly “cutting-edge”. No one else promises you NETWORKING RESULTS. We do, based on previous performance.

Obviously, no single person could ever attend each and every one of the many different sessions that will be available for the NGCRC’s 2026 International Gang Specialist Training Program: one person has only 24 hours to spend in classroom training. There may be ten different “sessions” being taught at the same time: you can only be in one place at one time. No one provides a larger selection of training options than the NGCRC, it really is a massive event, see the testimony and endorsements of those who attended last year’s event. 30 Specialty Areas to pick from. Over 100 Courses too.

**This is Your Invitation to Attend the
August 3-5, 2026 Conference:**

It’s the conference you cannot afford to miss. In the summer of 2026, the National Gang Crime Research Center will hold its 29th international gang training conference in Chicago — once again bringing together the Nation’s top experts on gangs and gang-related issues.

It’s the experience you’ve come to expect — the opportunity to network with law enforcement, corrections, private sector professionals from all over the country and abroad.

Once again, the NGCRC will be offering you an enormous variety of choices to craft the education that is most pertinent to you and your jurisdiction.

You’ll come away with new insights, the latest intell, and the most effective strategies to combat gangs.

You can’t afford to miss the NGCRC’s 29th International Gang Specialist Training Conference in Chicago this summer (2026).

Don’t delay!

There is a registration form for you at the main NGCRC website (www.ngcrc.com) and on page 16 of this publication.

An Option for 2026: The Double Major

The NGCRC has had repeated requests for this over the years, the idea of having a “double major”: i.e., to be able to sign up for two (2) different specialty track areas. The benefit, of course, is that such a “double major” would result in two different specialty track certificates: one certificate for each of the two tracks.

The NGCRC is pleased to announce that the double major option is now available and it is described here.

Q: What does it mean to have a double major?

A: All it means is you can have two “tracks”; you have to log in a minimum of four hours in each of the two specialty areas.

Q: How many certificates do I get if I am registered for non-certification?

A: None.

Q: How many certificates do I get if I registered for certification?

A: Two: one for your program of study reflecting the completion of the 2026 program consisting of 24 hours of training, and one for your specialty area. Previously in history people attending the conference could only have one track.

Q: If I sign up for the “two track option”, how many certificates will I get?

A: Three: your basic 24 hour program completion certificate, and then one each for each of the two (2) different tracks.

Q: How much does it cost to sign up for the Two Track Option?

A: \$90.00 if paid before July 1st; \$105 if paid on or after that or onsite.

Q: What if there is a scheduling conflict and I discover at the conference I cannot accumulate the minimum number of hours in one of the two tracks?

A: We will refund your Two Track Option amount in full, no problem; and return you to the one track registration mode of your choice.

THE REGULAR TRAINING TIME SCHEDULE

Here is the Monday (August 3, 2026), Tuesday (August 4, 2026), Wednesday (August 5, 2026) training schedule (August 3-5, 2026): training sessions 8:00 am-noon, 1 hour lunch break, training sessions 1:00 pm-5:00 pm. Thus, a total of 24 training hours are logged in during the regular training schedule. We do, of course, offer “pre-conference” sessions for credit (on Sunday afternoon: mostly for those new to gang training). On August 4th, Sunday, you can register from 3:00pm to 10:00pm, pick up your badge and bag of goodies.

Some evening functions (after 5:00 p.m.) are also going to be scheduled. There are also “early riser” sessions: for those who want a session before 8am. There will even be “noon sessions”: we are doing this to accommodate travel arrangements where persons may arrive late, or where they may have to leave the training site to return early. Dress code: informal. All training rooms are air conditioned.

You can study the actual hour by hour, day by day, room by room, schedule at the website: www.ngcrc.com/schedule.html

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE NGCRC:

A wealth of additional information, too much to print in this publication, about the NGCRC’s 2026 Gang Specialist Certification Training Conference is provided at the NGCRC website. The NGCRC website provides much more detailed information about courses, including new courses recently added to the curriculum, and information about signing up for special events like the tours of the juvie detention center. Simply log on to the NGCRC website and click the “2026 Conference” navigation button.

And, Plan B, you can always call the NGCRC Conference Help Line, if you have any questions, just call (708) 258-9111. Our fax number is (708) 258-9546.

**Some Quotes From Those Who Attended the 2024
NGCRC Gang Training Conference (Chicago):**

“Good variety of courses. Great networking.” Elton Hall, Inspector, Winnipeg Police Service, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

“The staff were incredibly helpful & hospitable.” Michelle de Groot, Gang Prevention Coordinator, Winnipeg Police Service, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

“I wanted to take a moment to thank the event coordinators of the training sessions that have conducted for us. The efforts in preparing the materials and delivering the content have been greatly appreciated. Overall, I found the training to be very beneficial, and I feel more knowledgeable with the information shared with us. Thank you for your dedication and hard work.” Lucien Michel, U.S. Probation Officer, West Palm Beach, FL.

“I really appreciated how organized it was and the amount of classes that people were able to choose from. The small breakfast of coffee & a little muffin was awesome since the classes are really early.” Guadalupe Ochoa, Chicago, IL.

“I really enjoyed the flexibility of the training with the added online options.” Cassina Malaxonis, Detective, Lafayette Parish Sheriff’s Office, Lafayette, LA.

“I appreciate the large selection of classes and the passion and diversity of the speakers and their presentations.” Bryan R. Ireland Jr., Sergeant, Muscogee County Sheriff’s Office, Columbus, GA.

“The best thing to me was the information I received in each class that I can take back to my agency. I learned a lot about different gangs and how they are organized.” Timothy Moore, Corporal, Muscogee County Sheriff’s Office, Columbus, GA.

“Great way to see how other departments cross the nation are dealing with the same issues we are in our city.” Rage Staggs, Crime Gun Investigator, Tulsa Police Department, Tulsa, OK.

“The networking opportunity and variety of speakers and topics is unlike anything else you can find anywhere!” Mac Greer, Deputy, Ingham County Sheriff’s Office, Mason, MI.

“An incredible assortment of training from experts with a global perspective.” Ryan Watts, Director of Community Corrections, Ingham County, Mason, MI.

“There were tons of great new information that opens the mind to many different perspectives and strategies that will benefit not just the career, but one’s life. I enjoyed how many different and similar minds were in one room and hearing the experiences of the different career paths with criminal justice.” Reggan Northrup, Diversion Case Manager, Partnership for Child Health, Jacksonville, FL.

“Meeting police officers from all over the country and hearing their experiences. Listen to police officers that still love the job is also refreshing w/today’s LE environment.” Josh Lane, Detective, Will County Sheriff’s Office, Joliet, IL.

“I enjoyed the ability to attend additional training outside of the training track. The conference rooms were clean and nice. Many opportunities to network.” Paul Spicer, Crime Gun Investigator, Tulsa Police Department, Tulsa, OK.

“I always appreciate the variety of classes to choose from; including all fields of work.” Leeanna Brown, 20th Judicial District Juvenile Court, Conway, AR.

“The conference provided a lot of different ideas and perspectives that I will definitely take back with me and use to build on to craft strategies to employ going forward.” Mark Monroe, Assistant District Attorney, York County District Attorney’s Office, York, PA.

“This is always the best gang conference out there. Thank you for all the hard work.” James Sutphin, Detective, Toledo Police Department, Toledo, OH.

“In this work most of us feel alone as our peers cannot comprehend the magnitude of our work, when I am here w/my peers there is understanding & community.” Robert Fiorello, Director, Juvenile Intervention Services, PEI Kids, Lawrence Twp., NJ.

**Tours of the Cook County Temporary Juvenile
Detention Center**

There are two (2) tours of the Cook County Temporary Juvenile Detention Center (CCTJDC), one for Monday and one for Tuesday. Each can handle a maximum of 20 persons each. The first 20 who sign up for each event get into the event. Then the event will be “closed”.

The first thirty (30) persons who sign up will be offered, on a first come, first served basis, reported here, at the conference study file, until such time as all 30 have signed up. The tour will be closed when the total number signed up is 30.

For the Monday, August 3, 2026 event, you will need to leave the hotel at 12:00pm to arrive at the tour location approximately 1:00pm which is: Main Entrance, CCTJDC, 1100 S. Hamilton, Chicago, IL 60612. Transportation is provided. You will tour for approximately two (2) hours and return to the Hotel. If you are signed up for this tour and are not present at 12:00pm, anyone on a “waiting list” that is present may take your spot. Do not bring any weapons or phones or things that could be considered contraband in this secure facility (lighters, tobacco, etc), no filming, so leave your phones, etc at the hotel.

For the Tuesday, August 4, 2026 event, you will need to leave the hotel at 12:00pm to arrive at the tour location approximately 1:00pm which is: Main Entrance, CCTJDC, 1100 S. Hamilton, Chicago, IL 60612. Transportation is provided. You will tour for approximately two (2) hours and return to the Hotel. If you are signed up for this tour and are not present at 12:00pm, anyone on a “waiting list” that is present may take your spot. Do not bring any weapons or phones or things that could be considered contraband in this secure facility (lighters, tobacco, etc), no filming.

Must sign up for this in advance. First come first served. Open to N = 20 for each of the two events. Sign up form provided at the conference website: <https://ngcrc.com/conference.html>

Session credits: two (2) hours for track # 16 “Dealing With Gangs in Juvenile Correctional Facilities”.

**FIELD TRAINING LOCATION: NEAR SOUTHWEST SIDE
CCJTDC
1100 South Hamilton
Chicago, IL 60612**

Required: you must already be registered for the conference.
Required: you must sign-up for this tour separately using the form provided here or by sending an email to gangcrime@aol.com requesting that you be signed up for this field training event.

“Bloods Gang Member Sentenced to Four Years in Prison for Possessing Machinegun”

BOSTON, MA - - - A Bloods gang member from Lynn, Mass., was sentenced on September 10 in federal court in Boston for possessing a loaded machinegun that was recovered from his backpack in January 2025 during a motor vehicle stop.

Delvyn Liriano, 19, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns to four years in prison, to be followed by two years of supervised release. In May 2025, Liriano pleaded guilty to one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. Liriano was indicted on March 5, 2025.

According to court records, Liriano is a known member of the Bloods gang. In late December 2024, Liriano traveled into rival gang territory in order to confront rival gang members with a firearm. At the time, Liriano was on state probation for a 2023 felony firearm conviction in Lynn, in which he pointed a firearm in the face of a former girlfriend and threatened to kill her based upon his belief that she had associated with a rival gang member.

On Jan. 3, 2025, Liriano was observed entering a motor vehicle at his residence in Everett carrying a black backpack. Following a motor vehicle stop for a revoked registration due to lack of insurance, the black backpack carried by Liriano was found to contain a loaded Glock Model 27 firearm with a selector switch (also known as a machinegun conversion device) attached. Liriano was then placed under arrest. Based upon the presence of the selector switch, the firearm was capable of firing fully automatic and was therefore a machinegun. A subsequent search of Liriano’s cellular phones revealed pictures of him in possession of other firearms.

“Two Russian Mob Leaders Sentenced To 25 Years In Prison For Murder-For-Hire Targeting A Journalist On Behalf Of The Iranian Government”

MANHATTAN, NY - - - Jay Clayton, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, John A. Eisenberg, the Assistant Attorney General for National Security, and Christopher G. Raia, the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), announced on Oct. 30 that RAFAT AMIROV, a/k/a “Farkhaddin Mirzoev,” a/k/a “P,” a/k/a “Rome,” and POLAD OMAROV, a/k/a “Araz Aliyev,” a/k/a “Polad Qaqa,” a/k/a “Haci Qaqa,” were each sentenced yesterday to 25 years’ imprisonment for their participation in a murder-for-hire plot targeting Masih Alinejad, a journalist, author, and human rights activist, on behalf of the Government of Iran. In March 2025, Amirov and Omarov were found guilty of murder-for-hire, attempted murder in aid of racketeering, and related charges, following a two-week trial before U.S. District Judge Colleen McMahon, who imposed yesterday’s sentences.

“The Government of Iran, a sponsor of terrorism, assassination, and espionage around the globe, brazenly brought its efforts to murder Masih Alinejad to New York,” U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton said. “The plot exposed at trial involved actors on three continents, culminating with a hitman with an AK-47 outside Ms. Alinejad’s apartment in Brooklyn. Yesterday’s sentences send a clear message: the DOJ and our partners will expose and severely punish those who target U.S. citizens and bring terror to our community.”

Assistant Attorney General John A. Eisenberg said: “The defendants and their criminal associates came chillingly close to gunning down an Iranian-American journalist on the streets of New York. Tehran has long sought to silence Ms. Alinejad, and after multiple failed kidnapping attempts, turned to Omarov and Amirov and their organization to stalk and murder her. This case is part of a well-documented and disturbing rise in plots involving criminal networks paid by Iran to target dissidents in the United States and around the world. We are committed to holding accountable those who join forces with this vile regime to violate our national sovereignty or threaten U.S. citizens.”

FBI Assistant Director in Charge Christopher G. Raia said: “Rafat Amirov and Polad Omarov, two highly ranked members of the Russian Mob, attempted to assassinate Masih Alinejad to permanently silence her criticism of the Iranian government and public advocacy of human rights. These defendants operated as unlawful enforcers for a foreign government to target an American journalist on our nation’s soil. May yesterday’s sentencing emphasize the FBI’s steadfast commitment to protecting Americans against any foreign actor seeking to inflict terror and physical harm to further a political agenda.”

According to the Superseding Indictment, public court filings, and the evidence presented at trial:

AMIROV and OMAROV were high-ranking members of an Azerbaijani faction of the Russian Mob (the “Organization”) who worked with other members of the Organization to kill Masih Alinejad on instructions from high-ranking members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (“IRGC”). Ms. Alinejad has previously been the target of multiple plots by the Government of Iran to intimidate, harass, and kidnap her for her work as a journalist, author, and human rights activist who has publicized the Government of Iran’s human rights abuses, especially its discriminatory and oppressive treatment of women, repression of political expression, and killings of Iranians engaged in peaceful protests against the regime. As recently as 2020 and 2021, Iranian intelligence officials and assets plotted to kidnap Ms. Alinejad from within the U.S. for rendition to Iran in an effort to silence her criticism of the Iranian regime.

After its efforts to kidnap Ms. Alinejad from the U.S. failed in 2020 and 2021, the IRGC turned to AMIROV—a Vor, or Thief-in-Law, the highest rank in the Russian Mob—and OMAROV—the cousin of a powerful Vor who aspired to become a Vor himself—to locate, surveil, and murder her. The IRGC offered AMIROV \$500,000 for Ms. Alinejad’s murder and provided him with targeting information about Ms. Alinejad, including her home address. Beginning in approximately July 2022, AMIROV sent this targeting information to OMAROV. OMAROV, in turn, communicated this information to Khalid Mehdiyev, another member of the Organization who had been residing in Yonkers, New York, so that Mehdiyev could surveil Ms. Alinejad and murder her. AMIROV and OMAROV arranged the delivery of \$30,000 to Mehdiyev from the IRGC’s advance payment; Mehdiyev used a portion of these funds to buy an AK-47 style assault rifle, two magazines, and 66 rounds of ammunition.

In late July 2022, Mehdiyev repeatedly traveled to Ms. Alinejad’s neighborhood to surveil her residence and locate her. Mehdiyev sent photographs, videos, and updates on his stakeouts to OMAROV, who passed them on to AMIROV. AMIROV gave OMAROV intelligence about Ms. Alinejad’s home, location, and family members provided by his IRGC contacts to assist Mehdiyev’s attempts to locate and kill Ms. Alinejad. On July 24, 2022, Mehdiyev reported to OMAROV from Ms. Alinejad’s residence that he was “at the crime scene.” On July 27, 2022, OMAROV told AMIROV that Mehdiyev was ready to kill Ms. Alinejad, writing “this matter will be over today. I told them to make a birthday present for me. I pressured them, they will sleep there this night.” On July 28, 2022, Mehdiyev sent OMAROV a video taken from inside the car that Mehdiyev was driving with the assault rifle and a message reading, “we are ready.” As OMAROV continued to update AMIROV about Mehdiyev’s readiness, AMIROV cautioned OMAROV, “let him keep the car clean.” When Mehdiyev drove away from surveilling the residence on July 28, 2022, he was stopped after a traffic violation and, during a search of the vehicle, police officers found the assault rifle; 66 rounds of ammunition, including one in the chamber of the assault rifle; approximately \$1,100 in cash; gloves; and a black ski mask.

After Mehdiyev was arrested and placed into custody, OMAROV contacted Mehdiyev’s mother and threatened to kill her and her other son if she did not locate Mehdiyev, in part because the IRGC was demanding the return of its money.

“Five MS-13 Members Found Guilty of Committing String of Six Grisly Murders to Advance Their Standing in the Criminal Street Gang”

LOS ANGELES, CA - - - Five members of the transnational criminal organization Mara Salvatrucha 13 (MS-13) were found guilty by a jury on November 10 of committing six murders to advance their standing in the gang – killings in which the victims varyingly were strangled, shot, stabbed with knives or a machete, beaten with a baseball bat, then, in some cases, had their bodies thrown off a cliff or down a hill in the Angeles National Forest.

At the conclusion of a nine-week trial, a jury found the following defendants guilty of one count of conspiracy to violate the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act: Walter Chavez Larin, 26, of Panorama City; Roberto Alejandro Corado Ortiz, 30, of Baldwin Park; and Edwin Martinez, 28, of Cypress Park.

Chavez and Corado also were found guilty of two counts of violent crimes in aid of racketeering (VICAR) murder. Martinez was found guilty of three counts of VICAR murder. Bryan Alexander Rosales Arias, 28, of South Los Angeles, was found guilty of one count of VICAR murder. Erick Eduardo Rosales Arias, 27, also of South Los Angeles and who is Bryan Rosales’s brother, was found guilty of one count of VICAR murder.

“The horrific violence in this case underscores the urgency of destroying MS-13 and putting its depraved members behind bars,” said United States Attorney General Pamela Bondi. “Under President Trump, MS-13 can no longer unleash terror on the American people with impunity: We will eradicate this foreign terrorist organization and secure justice for its victims.”

According to evidence presented at trial, the defendants murdered their victims who either were – or perceived to be – members of the 18th Street gang, a rival of MS-13, or had violated MS-13’s rules.

The trial focused on MS-13 Los Angeles cliques that implemented gang rules that required its members to use murder and extreme violence to rise within its ranks.

The charges relate to machete, knife, and baseball bat killings in the Angeles National Forest and several other areas in remote, mountainous locations in Los Angeles County. Those six murders – which included murders committed in the mountains near Malibu, in a remote area of the Santa Clarita Valley, and two in Van Nuys – are also charged as violent crimes committed in aid of racketeering (VICAR). Those six counts allege that the victims were killed “for the purpose of gaining entry to and maintaining and increasing position in MS-13 Los Angeles.”

In June 2017, one victim – who claimed he had a leadership role in MS-13– was taken to the Angeles National Forest then stabbed and hacked to death by his killers, including Chavez. Several of the assailants unsuccessfully tried to decapitate him then left his body behind.

In October 2017, another victim – rumored to be an 18th Street member – was lured to his death by two teenage girls. He was kidnapped, strangled, beaten with a baseball bat then fatally stabbed with a large hunting style knife. Before his body was thrown off a cliff in the Angeles National Forest. This victim’s assailants included Corado and Bryan Rosales.

In July 2018, a third victim – also rumored to be an 18th Street member – was lured to Malibu hills under the auspices of smoking marijuana and drinking beer with several other people. While the victim stood at a scenic overlook, Corado shot him in the back of the head. Corado gave the gun to Erick Rosales, who shot the victim before passing the gun to other MS-13 members who took turns shooting him. This victim’s body ultimately was thrown off the edge of a road down a hill.

Samples of Some of the 2026 NGC RC Training Sessions You Can Benefit From:

(2) **“What We Really Need for Gang Investigation Skills in the Next Decade”**, by Dr. Charles M. Russo, Royse City, TX. One (1) hour

Abstract

The landscape of gang investigations is rapidly evolving, demanding a fundamental shift from traditional methods to a more analytical, forward-looking approach. This session will equip attendees with the essential critical thinking frameworks required to meet the challenges of the next decade. Participants will learn how to apply structured analytical techniques to complex investigations, mitigate cognitive biases in threat assessments, and leverage disparate data sources for predictive analysis. The focus will be on moving beyond reactive enforcement to proactive intelligence-led operations. Attendees will leave with practical, evidence-based skills to enhance their investigative process, improve decision-making under pressure, and develop more effective strategies for dismantling criminal enterprises. This is not just about new technology; it is about a new way of thinking.

(3) **“Drug-Induced Homicide Investigations and Prosecutions: A Case Study and Step-By-Step Guide to Handling Fatal Overdose Cases and Prosecuting the Gang Members and Drug Dealers Who Dealt the Drugs”**, by Stuart T. Welch, Senior Contact Attorney, Harford County State’s Attorney’s Office, Bel Air, MD; and Detective Tyler Dailey, Harford County Sheriff’s Office, Bel Air, MD. Two (2) hours

Abstract

Convicting a drug dealer/gang member of homicide/manslaughter for dealing drugs that resulted in a fatal overdose is a complicated by extremely useful tool in impacting the drug trade within gangs and other drug dealers. This session provides step-by-step details of how to investigate and prosecute drug dealers for fatal overdose cases from the very beginning of receiving the dispatch call to sentencing after conviction. You will get to hear real case examples from the perspective of the lead detective and lead prosecutor that secured the first ever manslaughter conviction in their county for a drug dealer that dealt drugs resulting in a fatal overdose.

(7) **“Notes to a Rookie - Trials, Tribulations, Resiliencies”**, by Philip J. Swift, Ph.D., Municipal Courts, City Marshall Division, Fort Worth, TX; and Shannon Jones, Assistant Chief, Bexar County Probation Office, San Antonio, TX. One (1) hour

Abstract

This lecture introduces attendees to Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG). It focuses on the unique protective and risk factors that male and female first responders face, highlighting their increased likelihood of exposure to man-made traumatic events. Using Dr. Philip Swift’s and Assistant Chief Shannon Jones’ experiences as law enforcement officers, the lecture examines the impact of PTSD on “ordinary” first responders from both a male and female perspective. Attendees will gain insights into how trauma uniquely affects male and female first responders at all levels and how line officers are as vulnerable to PTSD as those assigned to high-risk assignments. The lecture concludes with a discussion on PTG and strategies for addressing the psychological and physiological symptoms of PTS and PTSD.

(8) **“Stress and Gang Investigators: Transitioning from Work to Home”**, by Christopher M. Felton, Ph.D., Fort Wayne Police Department, Fort Wayne, IN. One (1) hour

Abstract

It is no secret that suicide is the leading cause of death for police officers. Alcoholism, divorce, etc., are all too prevalent as well. Cumulative stress faced by gang investigators can be especially challenging: the demands of suppressing rising violent crime, managing informants, always targeting/interacting with society’s worst, extra scrutiny from command and courts, deadlines and targets handed down from superiors, working in small units full of Type A personalities, etc. And then you are expected to go home to the family and instantly switch it off; to transition back to a ‘normal’ person. This session will provide investigators with knowledge of cumulative stress and healthy coping mechanisms aimed at helping them manage the emotional rollercoasters they ride every day and transition from work to home. Armed with this info, investigators can lead better, more productive lives both as officers and ‘normal’ people, as well as be prepared to recognize fellow investigators who may be suffering in silence.

(17) **“Gang Ethics 101 - Don’t Shoot the Messenger”**, by Kenneth Davis, Graffiti/Gang Specialist & Private Investigator, Yonkers, NY. One (1) hour

Abstract

This course addresses current trends challenging the modern-day gang specialist. It reviews current issues that affect how we apply apprehension, prosecution, prevention, intervention, restorative justice, and information management practices to gangs and gang members. There are many ethical issues in dealing with gangs and gang members, and it affects every stage of the process, from investigation to aftercare, even gang research itself. Should violence interrupter staff be required to “warn and protect” when they learn that gun violence is imminent? Should someone who joins a gang remain in a gang database for the rest of their life? Attend this session to learn about ethical guidelines for dealing with gangs and gang members and to share your own scenarios.

(26) **“New Trends on Asian Gangs and Transnational Organized Crime Groups: Part 2”**, by Dr. John Z. Wang, Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, California State University Long Beach, Long Beach, CA. Four (4) hours

Abstract

This four-hour presentation (Part B) will provides the latest trends on Asian gangs and transnational organized crime groups via case videos, evidence examinations, and M.O. analyses in four modules: (5) New underground prostitution and money laundering methods on undercover tips, covert communication, super-note counterfeiting, and special transfer channels, (6) High tech crimes on burglaries, home invasions, gift cards, skimming, and Q.R. scams, (7) AI crimes on virtual kidnapping, Pig-Butchers, and encrypted currency investment, and (8) Law enforcement countermeasures on townhall meetings, Intel briefing, civic associations and social taboos.

(36) **“Procedural Justice: Can it Help Solve Violent Crime?”**, by Christopher M. Felton, Ph.D., Detective Sergeant, Fort Wayne Police Department, Fort Wayne, IN. Two (2) hours

Abstract

Treating people with the tenets of procedural justice (fairness and respect, equality and neutrality in decision making, and making sure they have a voice) has been qualitatively proven to increase a citizen’s level of cooperation with, as well as respect for, the police. This occurs both at the time of the instant contact and subsequently to the that initial interaction between a citizen and a police officer. Numerous cases have been documented where simply employing these tenets has led gand members and other violent offenders to not only cooperate and give information during a roadside stop, but in future interactions in different situations as well. In this session, Det. Sgt. Christopher Felton will discuss current research on Procedural Justice as well as the findings from his qualitative dissertation on the experiences and successes of officers actually employing procedural justice when attempting to build trusting relationships with citizens.

(37) **“Confronting Prison Gangs in the USA and Abroad”**, by Mitchel P. Roth, Ph.D., Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Sam Houston State University, Houston, TX. One (1) hour

Abstract

This presentation will compare and contrast various global strategies for policing and controlling prison gangs behind bars. It will also look at th impact of new types of inmates more skilled in advanced technologies, weapons fabrication, and such threats as drones and inadequate correctional security.

(38) **“Cutting the Core: Prosecuting Gangs to Lower Crime Rates”**, by Joel C. Muneşes, Senior Assistant State’s Attorney, Harford County State’s Attorney’s Office, Bel Air, MD. 1.5 Hours (90 Minutes)

Abstract

This presentation examines the evolution of Maryland’s gang statute, Criminal Law §9-801, via a case presentation of the July 4, 2023, shooting in Edgewood resulting in 11 indictments and convictions of Bloods and Crips gang members. The focus will be on the collaborative efforts between the State’s Attorney’s Office, law enforcement agencies, and lawmakers to enhance the statute’s effectiveness and practical application. A criminal gang statute can be a meaningful tool in combating gang-related criminal activity if it is both enforceable and responsive to the challenges encountered in the field. By fostering cooperation between prosecutorial authorities and law enforcement, Maryland has taken steps toward refining CR §9-801 to ensure it serves as a robust legal mechanism in the ongoing effort to reduce gang violence and promote public safety.

(39) **“The Illicit Fentanyl Crisis and Drug Poisonings”**, by Brian Townsend, MOCIC, Springfield, MO. Two (2) hours

Abstract

This presentation, led by former DEA Special Agent Brian Townsend, tackles the illicit fentanyl crisis head-on. It covers the history, dangers, and trends of illicit fentanyl, emphasizing its extreme lethality and impact on our communities. The presentation also dispels myths, recommends protective measures, and explores solutions. Ultimately, it’s a call to action, highlighting that drug use is preventable and collective efforts can make a difference.

THE NGCRC IS A FAMILY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT:

The NGCRC, unlike most other conferences, is “family friendly”. If you have a spouse or children who may need to visit with you during your training time period, the NGCRC has established the “family friendly policy” of providing Conference Identification Badges to family members (spouses, children, etc). This allows them to come in and have coffee/lemonade and donuts with you, etc. Thus, you are not “isolated” from your family. To receive I.D. badge credentials for your family members, just ask for “Family ID Credentials” in a fax or written letter to the NGCRC: Give their names. When you register, to pick up your own Registration Materials, you will find their “Family ID’s” in your own registration kit. They will be allowed into the “secure areas” so they may contact you. These “family members” will not receive “Goody Bags” or conference materials, but they will be allowed past the security check points and will therefore be able to pass without delay or hindrance to meet with you if necessary. Some restaurants and eateries give NGCRC trainees a discount (no discount on liquor, food only), and all you have to do is show your Conference Identification Badge. The “Family ID’s” are good for the food discounts.

Enhancements — EARLY, NOON, and EVENING SESSIONS:

To accommodate those individuals who want to leave early on Wednesday August 6th, and still allow them to accumulate their 24 hours of training, we are this year planning to offer some early morning, lunch time, and evening sessions. The current plan is to have a few such sessions available for this purpose. This will provide at least four (4) hours of training outside of the regular training schedule, which will allow persons who need to leave at noon on Friday to do so.

Rooms are available at the Hotel at the same rate for Friday nights and Saturday as well, at the same rates, if anyone is interested in getting cheaper flights by staying an extra day or so: just ask the hotel registration personnel. You should be able to get the same rate for two days prior and two days after the 4-6 August time frame. If you have trouble with the hotel, feel free to call the NGCRC and ask for the “hotel liaison” to see if there is anything we can do to help. Sometimes the “block of bumper rooms” sells out (bumper rooms are those before and after the conference).

You basically “pick and choose” your own custom-made training schedule. You can take your pick from a number of different session choices. There are typically six or seven sessions going on at any particular time. So, you just “vote with your feet”. The full schedule of courses by room numbers, and day/time slots is posted at www.ngcrc.com/schedule.html

Statistical Evaluation Results from the 2025 NGCRC Training Conference:

INTRODUCTION

The 2025 Twenty Eight NGCRC Gang Specialist Training Conference was held during August 4 thru August 6, 2025 in Chicago, Illinois at the Westin Michigan Avenue Hotel, 909 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The statistical evaluation results are reported here from the large number of persons attending the conference who provided such evaluation surveys. What this documents is an amazing level of “success” as measured in terms of the satisfaction of those who attended.

The bottom line finding here is that the NGCRC offers training that is consistently rated over time as exceptional in value and quality.

THE NGCRC ATTRACTS THOSE WITH AND WITHOUT PRIOR TRAINING ON GANGS

One statistical result from the evaluation forms completed by those attending the 2025 NGCRC training conference reveals the NGCRC attracts those with and without prior training in gangs. In the 2025 cohort some 60.4 percent indicated that they had not previously received any training about gangs. Thus, some 39.6 percent of those attending the NGCRC training conference indicated that they had in fact been previously trained on gangs.

So a little over half of the attendees in 2025 had no prior training on gangs.

Also, about two-thirds (66.8%) reported that this was the first time they have attended an NGCRC gang training conference.

FEW ARGUE WITH THE FACTS: THE NGCRC OFFERS MORE CHOICES THAN ANYONE ELSE

One very powerful statistical result from the evaluation forms completed by those attending the 2025 NGCRC conference relates to the number of choices a person does or does not have in terms of different options for classes to attend. In some training programs there is no choice at all, or few or very limited choices. Some 91.7 percent of those attending the NGCRC 2025 conference reported that “compared to other gang conferences I have attended, the NGCRC had more choices for sessions”.

OVERWHELMING MAJORITY REPORT “BEST GANG TRAINING EVER”

As a testament to the high quality of the training experience at the 2025 NGCRC training conference, another significant statistical result from the evaluation indicated an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the training. Some 90.2 percent of those attending the conference reported that it was, “in my opinion, the best gang training event I have ever attended.” Such high levels of praise from people all over the USA and abroad are indeed hard to achieve.

ALMOST EVERYONE WANTS TO COME BACK NEXT YEAR

Another measure of the validity of high levels of satisfaction among those attending the NGCRC’s 2025 conference is found in the results to the question measuring intention to “come back next year”.

The evaluation instrument included the following question: “I would like to attend the 2025 NGCRC 28th International Gang Specialist Training Conference that the National Gang Crime Research Center is currently planning. _____ True _____ False”.

Some 93.8 percent of those who attended the 2025 conference indicated that they want to attend the 2025 conference as well.

NEARLY THREE-FOURTHS WANT THE NGCRC TO RESERVE A SLOT FOR THEM IN 2026

One of the new organizational features introduced in 2025 was allowing attendees to reserve a slot for next year’s training conference. The evaluation also provided for whether or not, among those who want to come back in 2026, the NGCRC should “reserve me a slot for 2026”. Some 73 percent wanted the NGCRC to reserve a slot for them in 2026.

ACHIEVING NETWORKING: A GUARANTEED RESULT AT THE NGCRC CONFERENCE

Three separate evaluation questions addressed the issue of “networking” because this is always an important “added benefit” of any training, and it becomes particularly valuable as a resource when dealing with gang problems.

The first question asked, “Did you meet any new gang specialists that you may be able to network with in the future while you were at this conference”. The results of the evaluation question about whether the participants at the 2025 NGCRC training conference were able to achieve networking showed an astounding 94.1 percent reported that they were able to achieve such networking while at the conference.

The second question sought to establish a baseline for how important the factor of “networking” was to those attending the 2025 NGCRC conference. The second question therefore asked the participants “Was the opportunity to network with other gang specialists something that you wanted to achieve while at this conference?” Here we find that 97 percent indicated that networking was an important goal for them at the conference. Based on this, it is safe to say that a very high level of success was achieved regarding the goal of networking at the 2025 NGCRC Training Conference.

A number of specialized “networking receptions” were available to anyone who wanted to participate in these events during after hours. These are well planned and well managed events designed to enhance networking among professionals. Thus, a third and final question about networking in the evaluation survey asked, “Did you attend any of the special networking receptions?” Here we find that about two-thirds, some 65.7 percent, attended one or more of these specialized reception events. There were five (5) different social networking receptions available free to attendees at the 2025 NGCRC training conference.

VERY HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF TAKE HOME TRAINING MATERIALS

The rating system used by the NGCRC to evaluate the performance of the trainers and presenters, as well as its own operations, utilizes a “scale” of values from an absolute low value of “zero” to indicate the low extreme of “not satisfied” to an absolute high value of ten (10) to indicate the high extreme of “very satisfied”. Thus, the “score” in such cases is easy to interpret: the higher the score, the higher the level of satisfaction.

The “mean score” is what is used to calculate an overall score for performance. The mean is the arithmetic mean, a measure of central tendency in the data, and it is calculated by means of an SPSS analysis. SPSS is a statistical software package widely used in the social sciences and criminology.

The evaluation form included the following question measuring the quality of materials: “How satisfied were you with the quality of the take home training materials provided to you?”. Each participant is provided with a “take home goody bag” that contains various printed training materials for future use. The results indicated a mean score of 8.11 on a zero to 10 point scale.

A second question asked, “How satisfied were you with the quantity of take home training materials provided to you?” And here again a very high score emerges, a mean value of 8.14 was found for this factor.

MANY WON SOMETHING IN ONE OF THE RAFFLES

There are various raffles at the NGCRC conference, some occur at the networking receptions and some are scheduled through the Operations Center.

The evaluation form asked the conference participants, “Did you win anything in any of the raffles?” The results indicated that almost half of those who attended, or 62.1 percent of those attending the conference, reported winning something in one of the raffles.

JUST OVER HALF ATTENDED AN EVENING CHICAGO CUBS BASEBALL GAME

The exit survey question in the evaluation form ask the attendees “did you attend any of the Cubs Baseball Social Networking Events”? There were two such events, one for Monday, and one for Tuesday. The results from the Evaluation Form data analysis show that 57.9 percent indicated participating in this popular event.

HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH NGCRC STAFF

The evaluation form included the question “How satisfied were you with the staff and volunteers of the National Gang Crime Research Center in terms of making your experience at the training conference a quality time?”. The results indicated a mean score of 8.78 on a scale between zero and ten, again a very high level of satisfaction with the NGCRC staff. The staff provide a number of useful functions to the conference participants, from security to equipment technician support. Scoring near or above a score of 9.04 on a zero to 10 scale is an “A” in anyone’s book.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS GAVE “HIGH GRADES” TO THE NGCRC AS AN OVERALL EVALUATION RESULT

Finally, another question on the evaluation form asked the 2025 NGCRC conference participants to “Give us your grade for how we did overall in trying to make this conference experience a good one for you. For a final grade, I give this conference an _____ A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____ E _____ F _____”.

The results indicated that most gave the NGCRC an “A”. About a third gave the NGCRC a grade of “B”. Thus, over three-fourths of the trainees rated the NGCRC training experience as an “A” or “B”, the highest possible grades. Again, from a different way of measuring the same thing (overall training experience), we find additional strong evidence of a high level of satisfaction among persons who attended the conference. A GPA of 3.57 (where 4=A, 3=B, 2=C, 1=D, 0=F) was the mean score from this analysis. Thus, conference attendees gave the NGCRC an overall grade of “A minus/B Plus” it would appear from the 2025 evaluation results: again, a remarkable achievement.

What’s New: Get Your Free Ticket to a Baseball Game.

This *IS A BASEBALL SOCIAL NETWORKING EVENT*. These tickets are available free to those registered for Certification or Non-Certification, one per person on a first come, first served basis. One ticket per person. Only one baseball networking event ticket per person. We purchased tickets for the Monday August 4th (starts 7:10pm) Cubs vs. Cincinnati Reds game. We are also purchasing tickets for the Tuesday August 5th (starts 7:10pm) Cubs vs. Cincinnati Reds game. Read below on how to get on the “first come, first served” list for the tickets.

If you are going to one of the Cubs events, familiarize yourself with the following information about “Wrigley Field”: <https://www.mlb.com/cubs/ballpark/information/guide> And here is some information on parking and transportation to Wrigley: <https://www.mlb.com/cubs/ballpark/transportation>

We need your email address to send you the electronic ticket. The actual email containing your electronic ticket will not come directly from the NGCRC, it will come from the MLB. We had a few people in recent years that ended up basically throwing away their electronic tickets because their government email system treated the email about their ticket as spam, and just got deleted.

How do you get a ticket: Just check “yes” on the registration form for the question “I want to attend the baseball networking event”. The NGCRC is giving away tickets to this game to those who are registered for the conference (one per person). You will be sitting in good company as you will be seated in a large group of other gang specialists: people attending the NGCRC Conference. So it is a remarkable way to network as well.

Some Direct Quotes from Those Who Attended the 2025 NGCRC Conference

“The experience, networking and obtaining additional gang intel has been a rewarding experience. The staff has been extremely sweet/kind.”, Shannon D. Doyle, Detective, Jackson Police Department, Jackson, MS.

“This conference experience exceeded my expectations!”, Ryan Topping, Probation Officer Supervisor, Floyd County Probation, New Albany, IN.

“Best experience from NGCRC was all the various opportunities to network with others in the field. I was able to learn additional effective interventions to take back and use in my community.”, Brenda Guzman, Juvenile Counselor II, Washington County Juvenile Center, Hillsboro, OR.

“Networking, new information, skills. I connected with law enforcement on a deeper level than I thought possible.”, David Moore, Special Agent, ATF, Oklahoma City, OK.

“I enjoyed the networking opportunities. The people, both attendees and trainers, were knowledgeable and welcoming. The conference was very well organized and easy to navigate.”, Brandon Maxwell, Clinical Director, Bashor Childrens Home, Goshen, IN.

“The conference location, course offerings, and social events were fantastic.”, Hammad M. Khan, Assistant Attorney General, Kentucky Office of the Attorney General, Louisville, KY.

“I liked the different and variety of classes. The option to choose which classes to attend really makes the training experience better.”, Nathan Olson, Detective, Ingham County Sheriffs Office, Mason, MI.

“The ability to network, share, and gather ideas from other gang investigators throughout the nation. It’s good to come out of our local bubble sometimes and see what the rest of the nation is doing to confront gangs”. David S. Bastini

“Networking & content.”, Christopher Grimes, Special Agent, ATF, Oklahoma City, OK.

“It was truly informative and very eye opening and a plethora of knowledge disseminated throughout the entire conference.”, Terry Burnside, Founder, House of Hope Peoria, Inc, Peoria, IL.

“Classes are good.”, William Elliott, police officer, Mobile Police Department, Mobile, AL.

“The networking while learning.”, Albert Jones, Investigator, Muscogee County Sheriffs Office, Columbus, GA.

“The networking opportunities are great.”, Lucas Buckner, Deputy, Ingham County Sheriffs Office, Mason, MI.

“Knowledge of all the instructors.”, Andrew Finn, Major, St. Joseph County Police Department, South Bend, IN.

“The Presenters.”, Cody Allen Shepherd, Pathfinders, Danville, VA.

“I love everything about the conference for this being my first time.”, Ar Taurus Harvell, Detective, West Memphis Police Department, West Memphis, AR.

“Excellent networking.”, Christopher Lane, Prosecutor, Floyd County Prosecutors Office, New Albany, IN.

“The amount of classes available is wonderful.”, Jacob Howell, Investigator, Richland County Sheriffs Department, Columbia, SC.

“How open and personal people were.”, William Powers, President, Crossing the Rubicon, Quincy, MA.

“I appreciated the multiple options for sessions at one time.”, Megan Starrett, Senior Assistant Prosecutor, Stark County Prosecutors Office, Canton, OH.

“Seeing all perspectives, from all sides; law enforcement, DA.’s direct service providers.”, Lorie Whitaker, Clinical Caseworker, Principles Inc, Pasadena, CA.

“Quality of presenters and variety of topics and sessions wee excellent. Networking opportunities were great.”, Elizabeth Stigdon, Chief Deputy Prosecutor, Floyd County Prosecutors Office, New Albany, IN.

“Classes and networking.”, Terrance Stone, CEO, Young Visionaries Youth Leadership Academy, San Bernardino, CA.

“I loved the diversity and how different regions were represented.”, DiJon Vaughn, Case Manager, POIC (Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center), Portland, OR.

“Really liked case studies and hearing feedback from presenters.”, Diondre Doaks, Detective, Seattle Police Department, Seattle, WA.

“The instructors were very knowledgeable and the course instructions appeared well planned.”, Tyler Meldrum, Detective, Seattle Police Department, Seattle, WA.

“Expert presenters.”, Robert T. David Sr, Violence Prevention Manager, City of Danville, Danville, VA.

“Able to connect with people with different back-grounds in law enforcement like district attorneys and see their point of view. Example: Mock.”, Angel Martinez, Police Officer, Chicago Police Department, Chicago, IL.

“Great training to take back to my department.”, Gregory C. Hahn, Officer, Delaware County Sheriffs Department, Delaware, OH.

“Networking with different people the world.”, Denzel Mays, Youth Intervention Aide, City of Rochester Pathways to Peace, Rochester, NY.

“Some of the best range of gang training. I like being able to choose what classes I take.”, Andrew Foy, Special Agent, GBI, Columbus, GA.

“The variety of classes you can choose from.”, Christine Agueros, Deputy, Ingham County Sheriffs Office, Mason, MI.

“Networking.”, Michael Hollandsworth, Trooper, Indiana State Police, Ft. Wayne, IN.

“I learned so much and meet so many incredible experts every year at this conference. I was extremely honored to be able to present my own class this year, and I will be able to present my own class this year, and I will continue to come back as many years as possible!”, Stuart Welch, Senior Contact Attorney, Harford County State’s Attorneys Office Bel Air, MD.

“It was very informative and interesting to hear how other municipalities work with their judicial systems and federal agencies for successful operations and prosecution.”, Anabel Preciado, Police Officer, Chicago Police Department, Chicago, IL.

“Overall great conference. Very informative, Great instructors. Look forward to coming back next year.”, Christopher Calhoun, Juvenile Deputy, Hamilton County Sheriffs Office, Noblesville, IN.

“Some very interesting and engaging presentations.”, Lauren Selby, Detective, Seattle Police Department, Seattle, WA.

“**The Release Larry Hoover File: An NGCRC Special Report**”

CHICAGO, IL - - - The significance of this story is that it quite literally about the “Free Larry Hoover” and “Free Hoover” line of gangwear clothing that has a history of being sold on eBay and which many gang specialists have seen over the last 35 years. Wearing a Free Larry Hoover t-shirt, sweat shirt, hat, hoodie, or jeans is a fashion statement supporting the release of Larry Hoover. These items of clothing are easily found and sold through eBay, just type in “release Larry Hoover” into the eBay search bar to see a long list of online sellers who produce and distribute this type of gangwear. The belief system espoused by wearing this kind of clothing item is a sympathetic view of the Larry Hoover as the “Chairman of the Board” or leader and founder of the Gangster Disciple Nation street and prison gang.

This is a study of a collection letters sent to Illinois authorities by persons asking for Larry Hoover to be released once and for all.

The ten letters and one email written to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, or the State of Illinois Governor, are the subject of the present analysis. An FOIA request was made to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board by the NGCRC on October 28, 2025. The information provided in response to the FOIA request revealed there were eleven letters on file in favor of the release of Larry Hoover, or providing executive clemency, or providing a pardon.

The one surprise here is that we found no letters in opposition to providing executive clemency to Larry Hoover. There were no letters were on file from the Chicago Police Department or any other City of Chicago, Cook County, State of Illinois, or federal agency that were sent to oppose the release of Larry Hoover. It is possible, of course, that such letters might be sent after November 14th, 2025, which was the cut-off date for when the information made available for analysis here. We have seen no such “against” letters in the information provided here.

Use of a FOIA Request to Identify Source Documents

The source documents here are letters that were typed or handwritten, or emails, sent on behalf or against the release of Larry Hoover and which came to the attention of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board. It is standard procedure to use a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board in order to get copies of all of the written documents or statements made for or against an individual. This is required to get copies of the source documents used in the analysis here.

High Skill Level of the Transcription Typist

The transcription typing was completed by one person with a doctorate degree who also specializes in digital media and has had advanced training in digital forensics. The work was checked for validity by comparing transcription results word by word with the text that appeared in the original source document. The work entailed transcribing N = 11 letters or emailed documents in the custody of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board and transcribing these narrative documents strictly according to the rules of transcription.

Rules of Transcription

We do not correct spelling errors for the author, we transcribe exactly the what is spelled in the source document the way it is spelled there. We do not make editorial corrections to the grammar and punctuation for the author, we transcribe their text exactly the way they typed it or printed it or wrote it cursively in their own writing. If there is no indentation in the original source document, no indentation will be added when it is transcribed here.

Use of and insertion of the “(sic)” marker in transcribed text which contains an error is standard editing in the rules of transcription here for the benefit of the reader of the transcription. In Figure 1, for example, the author correctly spells the word “Governor” in lines 1, 13, and 17 but spells it differently in line 21 (“Governer”). Where appropriate the editing code of “sic” is used to denote that it was an error in its original form as it appears exactly in the source document. One letter did not correctly spell Larry’s last name (Figure 3) was another example.

There are also letters where the authors had difficulty correctly spelling the name of Governor Pritzker, so in that kind of instance the spelling error in its original way of being presented on the letter would in the transcription be followed by (sic). The eleven letters are presented in Figures 1 through 11 below.

Overall Findings

The analysis of eleven source documents shows Larry Hoover is portrayed as worthy of expeditious positive consideration for executive clemency. Six of the letters were written by two persons - - - a college student in Mississippi and the head of a non-profit in Illinois. Two of the letters had their name or signature information redacted in the source document so that they become anonymous for the review here. In most cases, then the authorship of the letters is available to analyze as well, showing a multi-state level of concern and support for the granting of executive clemency.

The letter in Figure 4 appears to be the actual writing of Larry Hoover appealing directly to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board. It is most clearly the case he is asking the board in a respectful way to be released back to society. Figure 4 includes a letter purporting that Larry Hoover somehow took advantage of what scant educational opportunities he was afforded and still achieved a Master’s Degree. We would love to know more about that topic but we have not been able to confirm anything like that. If we are talking about a Master’s level university degree here it would have seemed vital to include that information in an appeal for executive clemency because it would represent an incredible kind of educational upgrade achievement by an inmate in prison custody.

One of the letters (Figure 11) claimed that the Gangster Disciples are not a threat. This is the view from a writer whose self description or occupation is that of being a career military person (Navy Intelligence). He says *“I work for the Navy Intelligence and was working domestically on the streets for a year or two. This organization or gang he allegedly started isn’t much of a threat.”* So the author gave a different point of view if you were thinking gangs like the Gangster Disciples were bad things, this letter said *“They actually seemed to help some while I was working for the country. I was actually in the gang as a teenager for a year before I joined the U.S. Navy. It seems to have always centrally been Growth and Development ideology. Anyhow, I think Larry Hoover has done enough time for whatever wrongs he has done to society. I would like to petition for his release as a career military person.”*

Five of the letters were written by either Larry himself or former members of his gang.

Conclusion

This project examined the eleven letters sent to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board about he case of Larry Hoover. There were a couple surprises that surfaced. One of the surprises was that one of the letters made the assertion, not at all widely known and which has still not been verified, that Larry Hoover has achieved a Master’s degree while in prison. We have not been able to confirm any of that claim. Also it was surprising to see a letter from a career military person show up as one of the letters in support of granting executive clemency.

Historically, in America, it is not uncommon for persons occupying the role of Governor to issue pardons near or about Christmas time each year. If asked to bet if Larry Hoover will be getting that kind of Christmas present this year, we would probably bet “no”. But not because of the outpouring of letters from law enforcement agencies sent in opposition to Larry’s release as that was not a factor here. Our prediction would be that any such release decision would be made shortly after Christmas, maybe in January, 2026.

Figure 1: Letter by O’Neal in Support of Larry Hoover’s Release Transcribed as in its Original Document (Date stamped Office of the Governor June 23, 2025; date stamped received by Prisoner Review Board June 17, 2025)
6-6-2025
Dear Honorable Governor JB Pritzker
I hope once this letter reaches your office desk, you are in great spirit and health.
My name is Michael O’Neal from the great city and state of Grand Rapids Michigan.
I’m reaching out to you, because I am asking you to pardon (Mr. Larry Hoover) from his state case, also I understand you have very challenging job, and I believe that played a part in the decision of the black community understanding in voting for you in Illinois, that your voice wold make the right decision for he black community, who would stand up for the people in the black community, that truly have no real voice in illinois, now we feel you are that voice, that understand the law and who will make the right decision for the black community as (Mr. President Trump) made challenging decision (Mr. Trump) understood more than many that (Mr. Larry Hoover) fit the rule of law to have consideration from his federal case, and granted him a chance to gain his freedom back, after 52 years and at age 74 yrs old.
So Honorable Governor JB. Pritzker the black community understands (Mr. Larry Hoover) has made the right changes in his life to regain his freedom, and return home to his family as you and I do each day.
You wouldn’t be handing (Mr. Hoover), anything you would be honoring what the law truly say.
So Honorable Governor Pritzker, I and the black community believe in you and we are now asking you to believe are (sic) judgement and many, who knows (Mr. Larry Hoover) heart, that he is truly change and just once to come home to his family, after 52 yrs and 74 yrs old.
Lets grant (Mr. Larry Hoover) his freedom.
Honorable Governer (sic) JB. Pritzker.
I look forward to see your decision soon, may god (sic) continue to bless you and your family, also your staff.

Sincerely,

Signature Redacted by Illinois Prisoner Review Board

Figure 2: (1 of 3 unknown author letters)

(Date stamped Office of the Governor Jun 10 2025; date stamped received by Prisoner Review Board June 23 2025)

Dear Governor Prizter (sic),

I am writing to you on behalf of Mr. Larry Hoover asking you to please pardon that man and allow him to spend the last of his days with his family. I have researched his life story and seen he have made some bad choices in his early twenties that led him to the Illinois prison system. Since his initial incarceration, he has spent over 50 years of his life in incarceration. I see that he is highly respected in his community. Though some will not allow him to move forward from his past I see he has renounced and discouraged any involvement with gang activity. He had been an advocate for peace encouraging the youth to put down them guns and go to the ballot to make a change for the better in the community. He has been an example by getting his masters degree. I think he is what real change looks like and will be a positive influence where ever he resides. Just to be fair the crime for which he is locked up, the one who actually pulled the trigger on the same case with Mr. Larry Hoover was paroled in 1992. Mr Hoover has done twice the time. It would be more than fair to release him now at the age of 74 and let him spend his last days with his family. So please pardon that man. Thank you for your time and attention.

Name Redacted by Illinois Prisoner Review Board
Received ½6

Figure 3: (2 of 3 anonymous letters)

(Date stamp by the Prisoner Review Board Oct. 30, 2025)
(Handwritten marking on upper right top of document marked “EC Docket #40413 (Jan. 2026)”, possibly meaning the Executive Clemency Docket decision for Larry may be set for January of 2026)

October 12, 2025

Office of the Governor
401 S. Spring St.
Springfield, Illinois 62704

Honorable Governor JB Pritzker:

I have worked with and represented people most of my adult life. I am a retired schoolteacher, former Democratic Committeeman and former alderman. I am writing this letter on behalf of Mr. Larry Hover (sic), former gang member, Chicago, I believe Mr. Hover (sic), is a changed person. With his background, I think he could be an asset to his community. He could teach others not to follow his former lifestyle. I believe some young people would listen to him. I am asking that you pardon him or give clemency.

(Name redacted by the Illinois Prisoner Review Board)

Figure 4: Signature Redacted Letter from Hoover

(Date stamp July 29, 2025 by the Prisoner Review Board)
(Note: handwritten printed document)

LARRY HOOVER SR
#80063-024
P.O. BOX 8500
Florence, CO 81226

Prisoner Review Board
1001 N. Walnut St.
Springfield, IL 62702

Dear, hi to the parole board of the state illinois that looks over a inmate file on a release decision. This a review on Mr. Larry Hoover Sr that asking the board in a respectful way to amend my time back to the society on time being served on doing 52 plus years on both of the crimes that is in violation of the 1st amendment on abiding by the law for my freedom. This is a concern letter for me and my family on seeking a signatore (sic) release to the govonor once the parole board see’s the incarceration time on completing programs to gain my freedom. On, today am asking to the official on a fair decision of this cruel punishment was inviolation to the courts on giving that time for not doing anything violence to no human in the U.S.A. This petition and also other petition are very helpful to my release to abide by districts standard policy. Thanks to the official of making my life change back to my family with the help of others as Aubrey Gideon, Kanye West, Donald Trump, Aubrey Drake Ga(indecipherable writing truncated).

Figure 5: 1 of 3 Letters by Walker

(Note: letter appears on stationary with the logo and marking of BCCI, Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois)
(Date stamp Received JUN 25, 2025 by the Prisoner Review Board)
Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois
269 West Eldorado Street
Decatur, IL 62522
(217)706-5074
A.Walker@mybccci.org

June 2, 2025

Illinois Prisoner Review Board,
319 E Madison Street, Suite A.S.
Springfield, IL 62701

RE: Letter of Support for the immediate Release of Mr. Larry Hoover

To the Members of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board,

My name is Anthony Corey Walker and I serve as the State President of the Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, the Founder of the Greater Decatur Black Chamber of Commerce, and the Co-Founder of THE INC SPOT, the first African American owned and operated business incubator in downstate Illinois.

I respectfully submit this letter in strong support of the immediate release of Mr. Larry Hoover. Mr. Hoover has spent over 50 years in prison, the majority of it in highly restricted conditions. While his earlier actions are part of the public record. I am writing today to highlight the lesser known, but far more important, truth: he has changed. There is overwhelming evidence of his personal growth, spiritual development, and desire to lead others toward peace and transformation.

My father; Dr. Pastor Thomas Walker, has faithfully served our Decatur community for 45 years, and my uncle, Roger Walker; made history as the first “African American sheriff elected in Illinois and later served as Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections. My family’s legacy of justice, compassion, and public service informs my belief that Mr. Hoover deserves a serious second look.

I know firsthand, through my work with returning citizens and business incubation, that rehabilitation is real. I have seen individuals, some with difficult pasts, become productive, impactful members of society when given the opportunity. Mr. Hoover, at his age and with his record of reflection and personal responsibility, deserves the dignity of that opportunity.

I urge the Prisoner Review Board to formally re-evaluate his case with integrity and fairness, through a lense that accounts for his current character and contributions. I truly believe his release would represent not just for one man, but progress for a system that should reward transformation, not endlessly punish redemption.

Thank you for your time and for your work in upholding fairness within Illinois’ justice system.

Respectfully,

(Signature line redacted by Prisoner Review Board)

Anthony Corey Walker
State President,
Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois
Co-Founder, THE INC SPOT
A.Walker@mybccci.org
(217)705-5074

Figure 6: 2 of 3 letters by Walker

(Date stamp June 10, 2025 by the Office of the Governor)
(Date stamp June 23, 2025 by the Prisoner Review Board)
(Letter has the logo and initials BCCI for Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois)

Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois
269 West Eldorado Street
Decatur, IL 62522
(217) 706-5074
bccillinois.Inc@gmail.com
A.Walker@mybccci.org

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker Governor,
State of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

RE: Letter of Support for the immediate Release of Mr. Larry Hoover

Dear Governor Pritzker;

I write to you today not only as a concerned citizen but as the State President of the Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, the Founder of the Greater Decatur black chamber of Commerce, and the Co-founder of THE INC SPOT, the first African-American owned and operated business incubator in downstate Illinois.

My life’s work has centered around justice, rehabilitation, economic empowerment, and it runs in my blood. My father, Dr. Pastor Thomas Walker, has served the Decatur community for over 45 years, and my late uncle, Roger Walker, was the first African American elected sheriff in the state of Illinois. He later went on to become the Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections before his passing. My family has long been committed to public service, safety, and justice in this state.

It is from that same spirit that I respectfully urge your compassionate and serious consideration for the immediate release of Mr. Larry Hoover.

Mr. Hoover has been incarcerated for more than 50 years, much of it in isolation. While his early history is widely known, it is his transformation over the decades that deserves serious attention. By all credible accounts, Mr. Hoover has demonstrated profound remorse, personal growth, and a sustained commitment to peace and redemption. He is no longer the man he once was.

At a time when our nation is actively re-evaluating harsh sentencing and long-term incarcerations, particularly as it affects communities of color, Illinois has the opportunity to lead in restorative justice. Mr. Hoover’s case stands as a high-profile example of someone who has evolved spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

As someone who works directly with returning citizens, I know firsthand how powerful second chances can be. I’ve witnessed individuals who were once written off, go on to become business owners, mentors, and community leaders, and I believe Mr. Hoover deserves the same opportunity.

Furthermore, his release would serve as a symbolic act of healing, especially for communities that have endured decades of systemic harm. I am not asking for favoritism, only fairness. If an immediate release is not granted, I respectfully request your support for a formal clemency review or independent assessment.

I have also submitted a copy of this letter to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board for their careful consideration.

Thank you for your time, and for your continued leadership.

Respectfully,

(Signature redacted by the Illinois Prisoner Review Board)

Anthony Core Walker
State President, Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois
Co-Founder, THE INC SPOT
<mailto:\A.WALKER@mybccci.org>
A.WALKER@mybccci.org
(217)706-507

Figure 7: 3 of 3 Letters from Walker

(Date stamped November 3, 2025 by the Office of the Governor; Date Stamped Nov. 6, 2025 by the Prisoner Review Board)

Stationary Logo for the Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois

The Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois
269 W. Eldorado Street * Decatur, IL 62522
A Walker@myobcci.org * (217) 706-5074

October 23, 2025
The Honorable J.B. Pritzker
Governor of the State of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62705

RE: Respectful Support for Clemency Review - Mr. Larry Hoover

Dear Governor Pritzker,

On behalf of the Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, I respectfully urge your careful consideration of clemency for Larry Hoover. I write not to re-litigate the past, but to affirm the values of rehabilitation, accountability, and public safety-principles your administration has championed across Illinois.

For context, Mr. Hoover has been incarcerated for more than five decades since his 1973 Illinois murder conviction, which carried a 150-200 year state sentence. He later received additional federal life sentences in 1997 for enterprise-related offenses. In May 2025 the President commuted Mr. Hoover’s federal sentence, but that action did not affect his Illinois sentence; he remains incarcerated under the state term and has now formally petitioned you for state clemency, which the Illinois Prisoner Review Board has received for review.

Mr. Hoover is now in his mid-70s and has significant health issues; filings note he has (SECTION OF TEXT REDACTED HERE BY PRISONER REVIEW BOARD) and has spent years under highly restrictive conditions. These are material considerations when evaluating ongoing risk and humanitarian factors in a clemency analysis.

When I was incarcerated in Vandalia Correctional Center in 1992. I became affiliated with the Growth and Development organization and was genuinely surprised by its level of discipline and organization. Under Mr. Hoover’s leadership and teachings. Under Mr. Hoover’s leadership and teachings, the men there were encouraged to pursue education, self-respect, and peaceful conduct. I was personally challenged to focus on higher learning and personal growth. They made it clear that if anyone disrespected another man, engaged in violence, or violated institutional rules, they would be held accountable-not through violence, but through leadership and conversation. That structure instilled self-confidence, but through leadership and conversation. That structure instilled self-discipline and pride, shifting the mindset away from gang activity toward the core principle of Growth and Development-uplifting ourselves and our communities.

Nothing in this letter excuses serious harm caused in the past. Our position is grounded in the belief that people can change, and that age, health, and decades of confinement can substantially reduce risk public safety. Your own record on restorative justice and second chances demonstrates leadership that balances accountability with measured mercy where warranted.

As a former member of your Statewide African-American Leadership Committee during leadership across Illinois in support of your vision for fairness and inclusion. In that same spirit, we respectfully ask that Mr. Hoover’s petition receive a full and balanced review that weighs:

1) Public-safety risk today given his age and health;
2) Evidence of rehabilitation and renunciation presented in his filings; and
3) Humanitarian considerations after five decades of incarceration.

If the Illinois PRB scheduling allows, our Chamber is prepared to offer community-oriented re-entry supports (membership, business skills training, and counseling referrals) to help ensure any relief granted aligns with public safety and positive community impact.

Thank you for your continued leadership and for considering this request in the spirit of justice, prudence, and hope.

Anthony “Corey” Walker
President & Founder
The Black Chamber of Commerce of Illinois
Author, Cellblock to CEO

Figure 8: (Letter #1 of 3 from Gideon)

(Date stamp by the Prisoner Review Board July 21, 2025)
(Note: This second letter from Aubrey Gideon is also in all caps)
CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS PETITION FOR LARRY HOOVER FREEDOM

ILLINOIS PRISONER REVIEW BOARD
1001 N. WALNUT STREET
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62702

LARRY HOOVER
#86063-024
P.O. BOX 8500
FLORENCE, CO 81226

July 8, 2025

DEAR, HI TO THE REVIEW BOARD OF CONTROL WHEN PRESENTING A PETITION FOR A PUBLIC FIGURE THAT GO BY THE NAME OF LARRY HOOVER SR. ON, TODAY THIS IS A POLITE LETTER TO THE PAROLE BOARD ON HIS RELEASE ON THE CONTACTING OF THE GOVERNOR AS JB PRITZKER OF BOTH PARTIES TO COME UP WITH A DISMISS CASE AGREEMENT. MR HOOVER HAS COMPLETED ALL THE PROGRAMS THAT HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION FOR HIS FREEDOM OF THE LAW WHILE INCARCERATED. IN TODAY THIS IS A CONCERN LETTER FOR A CITIZEN THAT IS FROM JACKSON ,MISSISSIPPI THAT MOVE TO ANOTHER CITY OF CHICAGO ILLINOIS WHERE THINGS WAS ALREADY IN PROCESS BEFORE HIS MOVEMENT. THIS LETTER ON HIS CONSTITUTION RIGHTS HAS TO FOLLOW HIM FOR HIS FREEDOM IN THE DISTRICT OF HIS CASE POLICY FOR HIS RELEASE TO THE PAROLE BOARD TO TAKE THIS LETTER INCONSIDERATION FOR IS LIFE,FAMILY , THE FIFTY PLUS YEARS THAT HAS BEEN SERVE, AND ALSO FOR THE PARDON OF DONALD J. TRUMP THAT HAS ALSO BEEN FIGHTING FOR HIS FREEDOM OF DAY ONE ONCE HE ENTER THE PRESIDENT TERM. THANKS TO THE PAROLE BOARD FOR ACCEPTING THIS PETITION ON MR LARRY HOOVER FREEDOM.

SINCERELY,

AUBREY GIDEON
(Signature redacted by Prisoner Review Board)
(Name of notary redacted by Prisoner Review Board)
(Note: bottom of letter bears the stamp of a Notary Public for the State of Mississippi, Seveda Doss)
(Note: bottom right side of letter has a copy of the student photo I.D. for Aubrey Gideon from Mississippi Valley State University with a Spring, 2023 date of issue and the student ID number redacted by the Prisoner Review Board)

Figure 9: (Letter #2 of 3 from Gideon)

(Date Stamp: Received September 25, 2025 Prisoner Review Board)
(Note: Original document is typed in all caps)

LARRY HOOVER SR.
#86063-024
STATEVILLE CENTER
P.O. BOX 112
JOILLET (sic), IL 60434

ILLINOIS PRISONER REVIEW BOARD
1001 N. WALNUT STREET
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62702

DEAR, HI TO THE PAROLE BOARD ON THE HOLDING OF MR LARRY HOOVER SR. HIS CASE BEEN DISMISS OF THE 1ST SEP ACT LAW. THIS IS A POLITE LETTER ON MY BEHALF FOR THE MISS ASSUMPTION WAS NOT MENTION IN THE COURT OF LAW FOR HIS EQUAL RIGHTS IN FAIRNESS TO THE APPEAL COURTS ON ABIDING BY THIS CITIZEN RIGHTS FOR HIS JUSTICE. TO THE PAROLE BOARD THAT IS LOOKING ON HIS OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS FOR HIS RELEASE HAS TO SEE THAT ITS WASN’T RIGHT FOR HIS FAMILY ON THE FIGHT THAT THEY ARE CONTINUE TO PRESENT THEIR APPEARANCE TO THE GOVERNOR FOR HIS FREEDOM. THE LAWS AS HIS 14TH AMENDMENT WAS VIOLATED TO EVEN DO IN A FACILITY TO THIS INMATE ON HOLDING HIM INCARCERATED THAT WAS BROKEN FOR HIS FREEDOM IN THE STATEVILLE PRISONER. THANKS TO THE PAROLE BOARD ON TAKING THIS LETTER IN CONSIDERATION FOR HIS REVIEW OF A CHANGE MAN TO OWN THE RIGHTS TO HIS FREEDOM AS MR LARRY HOOVER SR.
(Signature line redacted by Prisoner Review Board)
AUBREY GIDEON/PETITION

Figure 10: (Letter #3 of 3 from Gideon)

(Date stamped Nov. 12, 2025 by the Prisoner Review Board)
(Handwritten notation upper right corner of letter/document “#40413 1 / 2026” which may refer to the executive clemency review case number scheduled for a decision in January of 2026)
(Note: Original letter is in the all caps style)

QUALIFICATION FOR RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE PAROLE BOARD
1001 N WALNUT ST
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62702

NOVEMBER 4, 2025

LARRY HOOVER
#86063-024
PETITION

HI, TO THE PAROLE BOARD REVIEW OF ILLINOIS AND ALSO OUR GOVERNOR MR JB PRITZKER HAS THE AUTHORITY TO COME TOGETHER MR HOOVER QUALIFICATION FOR HIS RELEASE. I HAVE A UNCLE THAT GO BY THE NAME OF MR LARRY HOOVER SR THAT HAS COMPLETE ALL THE TASK IN EARNING A EARLY RELEASE TO THE PAROLE BOARD. MY NAME IS AUBREY GIDEON THAT HAS BEEN FIGHTING FOR HIS FREEDOM SINCE DAY ONE OF HIS SLANDER AND FRAME HAS BEEN HELD ON HIS NAME OF THE LAW THAT VIOLATED HIS CITIZENSHIP IN THIS COUNTRY. ON, TODAY MR HOOVER HAS A SERIOUS CONDITION OF HIS HEALTH ON THIS REQUEST TO THE PAROLE BOARD IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICE OF THE LAW TO AMEND HIS FREEDOM IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL OF POWERS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE DELIBERATION ROOM OF THE BOARD MEMBERS TO SEE THAT HE HAS MET THE QUALIFICATION FOR HIS RELEASE OF THIS STATE CRIME. THANKS THE PAROLE BOARD MEMBER THE DIRECTOR AND THE GOVERNOR JB PRITKER (sic) ON PARTNERSHIP FOR HIS DISMISS ON THEIR VOTE AND ALSO YOURS.

SINCERELY,

AUBREY GIDEON

(Note: near the bottom of the signature that was redacted by the Prisoner Review Board is a copy of the student photo I.D - - - M Delta, MDCC Student: Greenwood, Aubrey Gideon, Issue Date 08/25/2025)

Figure 11:
Letter by Peeples

(Note: This document appears to have been an email)

FELICIAL L. WATERMAN
OFFICE ASSOCIATE
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD
PHONE # 217-782-7273

From: mario (line redacted by Prisoner Review Board)
Sent: Saturday, August 30, 2025 @10:41 am
To: PRB Clemency
Subject: Petition for Larry Hoover

Hello, I work for the Navy Intelligence and was working domestically on the streets for a year or two. This organization or gang he allegedly started isn’t much of a threat. They actually seemed to help some while I was working for the country. I was actually in the gang as a teenager for a year before I joined the U.S. Navy. It seems to have always centrally been Growth and Development ideology. Anyhow, I think Larry Hoover has done enough time for whatever wrongs he has done to society. I would like to petition for his release as a career military person

Mario Peeples
United States Navy (sort of clasified)

Take This Gang Intelligence I.Q. Test

1. Real members of the Crip gang will spell Rick “Ricc”, and will text about their “Glocc 9” to refer to their Glock 9mm, they show a linguistic superstition where they will not use “ck” in any word even if it is naturally occurring, because in their culture, and as used by their rivals (e.g., Bloods), “CK” means “Crip Killer”.
___ True ___ False

2. One example of secret inside gang language used by the Gangster Disciples, is that you can ask them “do you like Glazed Donuts?”, and in this code word, a real GD will admit to their gang affiliation and normally welcome you or at least warm up to you if you are not working for the criminal justice system. ___ True ___ False

3. Gangs don’t really sell crack according to one of the world’s experts on gangs.
___ True ___ False

4. Gangs don’t have anything to do with racism or racial conflict. ___ True ___ False

ANSWERS TO GANG IQ TEST:

1. True

2. False Calling a GD a “Glazed Donut” is the single highest insult to a GD, guaranteed to result in a violent reaction.

3. True

It is true a professor in California made this preposterous claim and no one challenged him because of his stature and position in academia, but like when he ranted against gang specialist police officers, he just had it all wrong. But it is of course a falsehood that gangs or gang members do no sell crack, they sell anything they can make a profit on.

4. False

Gangs form in the context of poor race relations or conditions of racial strife; gangs flourish under conditions of racial conflict. American prisons illustrate how race becomes the organizing principal for the conduct of gang affairs.

“Former NYPD Detective Pleads Guilty In Violent Racketeering Conspiracy”

MANHATTAN, NY - - - United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Jay Clayton, Assistant Director in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), Christopher G. Raia, and Commissioner of the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”), Jessica S. Tisch, announced that SAUL ARISMENDY DE LA CRUZ, a/k/a “Nene,” a/k/a “Venom,” pled guilty in September before U.S. Magistrate Judge Judith C. McCarthy to racketeering conspiracy in connection with his participation in a violent theft crew. As alleged, DE LA CRUZ, then a member of the NYPD, accepted bribes for providing crew members with confidential police information about potential victims and ongoing investigations. When he learned that the FBI was planning to arrest members of the crew, he tipped them off, allowing them to flee. DE LA CRUZ is scheduled to be sentenced on January 8, 2026, by U.S. District Judge Nelson S. Román.

“The NYPD is the best police department in the world and, sadly, Saul Arismendy De La Cruz turned his back on his colleagues and the people of New York,” said U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton. “The NYPD and the people of New York deserve better, and we will pursue a sentence that matches the seriousness of De La Cruz’s conduct.”

“Saul De La Cruz, a former NYPD detective, provided confidential law enforcement information—including updates in active investigations—to a ring of thieves in exchange for monetary kickbacks,” said FBI Assistant Director in Charge Christopher G. Raia. “His actions violated his oath to protect this city by enabling criminals to continue wreaking havoc on our local residents and ultimately evade arrest. While the vast majority of NYPD officers uphold their sworn dedication to serve, the FBI will continue to hold accountable those who prioritize personal financial enrichment over their duty to others, especially to further the operations of illicit enterprises.”

“The NYPD holds its officers to the highest standards, and it’s an affront to our entire department when someone so blatantly violates them and abuses the public’s trust,” said NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch. “Saul De La Cruz’s actions were not only highly illegal, but they put our officers at great risk and jeopardized our public safety work. We will continue to work with our partners in the FBI and U.S. Attorney’s Office to root out any misconduct and ensure justice is always served.”

As alleged in the Indictment and Superseding Indictments unsealed in White Plains federal court:[1]

DE LA CRUZ was one of a number of defendants charged for participation in a violent theft crew led by the fugitive DAGOBERTO SOTO-RAMIREZ, a/k/a “Pito”.

Between 2017 and 2022, SOTO-RAMIREZ organized a crew that committed residential burglaries and home invasion robberies, repeatedly targeting small business owners. The majority of the targeted victims were Asian American. Armed with guns and other weapons, members of the crew stole money, jewelry, and other property from scores of homes in states across the country. Others took part in the crew’s criminal scheme, which also included the use of false identification, bank fraud, and laundering theft proceeds. In addition, SOTO-RAMIREZ and other members of the conspiracy bribed DE LA CRUZ, first an officer and later a detective of the NYPD, who helped members of the crew escape arrest.

DE LA CRUZ, 33, of Queens, New York, pled guilty to one count of racketeering conspiracy, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

“Trinitarios Gang Members Extradited from Honduras to Face Rico Charges Related to Four Murders”

BOSTON, MA - - - Two Honduran nationals have been extradited to the United States to face racketeering charges. Each defendant – both of whom are alleged members of the Trinitarios – is charged with participating in two murders. They are alleged to have been in the United States illegally at the time of the murders and fled to Honduras to avoid federal charges.

Elvis Trujillo, 27, and Yeferson Vallecillo Cambar, 23, were arrested in December 2024 in Honduras at the request of the United States and extradited to the United States yesterday. Trujillo and Cambar will appear in federal court in Boston on September 25. Trujillo and Cambar were each indicted by a federal grand jury on one count of RICO Conspiracy.

Trujillo and Cambar are alleged to be members of the Trinitarios criminal enterprise, which is a transnational criminal organization with a large presence in Massachusetts communities. In February 2025, federal charges were unsealed against more than two dozen Trinitarios members as part of a multijurisdictional takedown. Those charges included specific allegations that the Trinitarios were responsible for over 10 murders taking place over the last decade. Trujillo is charged with allegedly participating in two of those murders. Cambar is charged with allegedly participating in two additional murders

According to the charging documents, the Trinitarios are a hierarchical criminal organization, with positions that are known to exist at the state and local chapter level, whose members adhere to a code of conduct. Emmanuel Paula-Cabral, a/k/a, “Nelfew,” a/k/a “Gordo,” “Manny,” allegedly served as the State Supreme of the Trinitarios for Massachusetts, responsible for the entirety of the gang’s criminal activities, coordination with other state leaders and communication with leadership of the Trinitarios in the Dominican Republic.

Trujillo is charged with participating in the murder of Juan Espinal in March 2017, and the murder of Mindy Tran in November 2017. The murder of Espinal is alleged in court documents to have been committed by Trujillo and another Trinitario member on the orders of Trinitario leadership. Trujillo and the other Trinitario member are alleged to have ambushed Espinal and fired at him as he walked past, then chased him down and fired more rounds killing him in the street. The murder of Mindy Tran is alleged in court documents to have been committed by Trujillo and another individual during an attempted robbery of Tran during a marijuana sale. Trujillo is alleged to have fired the shot that killed Tran.

According to court documents, Trujillo was in the United States illegally and is believed to have consented to removal to Honduras following his conviction in a separate shooting incident in order to avoid charges for his role in the murder of Tran.

Cambar is charged with participating in the murders of Jandriel Heredia and Abraham Diaz in September 2023. According to the charging documents, the Trinitarios wrongly believed rival gang members were in attendance at a graduation party and conducted a drive-by shooting that killed Heredia and Diaz and wounded five other surviving victims. The Trinitarios targeted the party to retaliate for the recent death of a Trinitario gang member. Cambar is alleged to have assisted in procuring the vehicle used in the double murder and assisting in the concealment and destruction of evidence after the fact.

Cambar is believed to have fled to Honduras to avoid charges for his role in the September 2023 shooting. Cambar was present in the United States during this time without legal status and without inspection at a port of entry.

The charge of conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity (also known as “racketeering conspiracy” or “RICO conspiracy”) provides for a sentence of up to life in prison, five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

“D.C. Inmate Gets an Additional 36 Months for Smuggling Contraband into Jail”

WASHINGTON, DC - - - Stefon Freshley, 29, of the District of Columbia, was sentenced on September 25 in U.S. District Court to 36 months in prison for his participation in a conspiracy to smuggle a knife, dangerous drugs including fentanyl, and cell phones into the Central Detention Facility (CDF) of the Department of Corrections while he was awaiting trial for his role in the shooting of a 14-year-old boy and his father, announced U.S. Attorney Jeanine Ferris Pirro.

Freshley pleaded guilty June 27, 2025, to conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States. In addition to the 36-month prison sentence, Judge Timothy J. Kelly ordered Freshley to serve three years of supervised release.

According to court documents, in March 2019, Freshley was awaiting trial in two separate assault with intent to kill cases. He was being held in the maximum security units of the CDF where he was housed with other detainees from the Clay Terrace neighborhood that included co-defendants Marcel Vines and Darius Robertson.

The Clay Terrace detainees recruited a correctional officer to smuggle contraband into the jail. One of the smuggled containers was intercepted by DOC investigators and included a switchblade, an iPhone, an iPhone charger, eyeglasses, bundles of marijuana and tobacco, rolling papers, gambling dice, three sheets of paper that had been impregnated with a synthetic cannabinoid, and cigarettes. The correctional officer was put on administrative leave.

Freshley and the other Clay Terrace inmates recruited a new officer to smuggle goods into the CDF. Prior to a July 2024 smuggling incident, Freshley coordinated the delivery of two unlocked phones into the CDF. One of the phones was used in an apparent attempt to intimidate witnesses in Vines’ murder trial. The post sparked increased courthouse security measures for Vines’ trial.

On July 25, 2024, the Department of Corrections conducted two searches of the Clay Terrace inmate units for contraband. DOC staff found, among other things, 269 blue pills which tested positive for fentanyl; 60 cigarettes soaked in an unknown liquid, 255 suboxone strips, seven pieces of paper soaked in an unknown liquid substance, three cellphones; and cigarettes.

On Aug. 30, 2024, Freshley was sentenced to 90 months in prison for his role in the drive-by shooting of a 14-year-old boy and his father. Freshley was a passenger in a vehicle with two associates on Dec. 28, 2018, when one of the associates fired about 30 rounds into a moving SUV. The boy was shot nine times, including in the head, abdomen, chest, and back. The father sustained gunshot wounds to his leg and hand. Freshley and his associates fled the scene.

The sentence handed down today by Judge Kelly will be served consecutive with the previous 90-month sentence.

This case was investigated by the DOC Office of Investigative Services, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the FBI Washington Field Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joshua Gold and Sarah Santiago.

Here’s a Course You Could Benefit from Attending the Summer of 2026 in Chicago:

(14) “A Basic Street Gangs Investigation”, by Kenneth Davis, Graffiti/Gang Specialist & Private Investigator, Yonkers, NY. One (1) hour. Notice: This course is restricted to Law Enforcement Only.

Abstract

The instructor will give an overview of one of his past street gang investigations. The session covers the example of initiating two search warrants simultaneously at separate locations: leader and second-in-command’s residences. The course covers an overview of the search warrant return (criminal evidence and gang’s intelligence)..

Bio

Kenneth Davis retired from the Yonkers Police Department in July of 2017. From 1985-1990 he was assigned to uniformed patrol (task force and public housing) and plainclothes (street-level and undercover narcotics). From 1990-2000 he worked street gangs, graffiti crimes and police academy. From 2000-2009 he was assigned to several middle/high schools as a school resource officer. In 2009 - 2017, as a detective, he continued investigating street gangs, narcotics (search warrants) and graffiti crimes. As the departments liaison, he assisted the YMCA’s Cure Violence/SNUG Program and the Westchester County Department of Corrections Re-entry Program. From 2017-present, he is a NYS private investigator and a graffiti/gang specialist presenting at various regional, national, and international conferences.

WHAT CITY IN AMERICA HAD THE WORST GANG PROBLEM IN 2024?

A sample of N = 241 Gang Specialists were asked on their Evaluation Form, “In your opinion, what city in the United States has the worst gang problem?”. The date of the data collection was August 7, 2024, and the gang specialists were mostly criminal justice officials (police, prosecutors, probation officers, etc) completing gang training at the NGCRC training conference held in Chicago. The results from this survey item are provided in Table 1.

When asked to pick the American city with the worst gang problem, the winner here is, hands up, Chicago (N = 111, 46%). Los Angeles comes in with the second worst gang problem in America with N = 63 or 26.1 percent. New York City is distant third (N = 12, 4.9%). No surprises here. These three larger cities together account for 77 percent of the sample. They are all gang epicenters, places long known for their gang problems, and exporters of gangs. The real story in Table 1 are the other large cities that are now having a significant gang problem and what is being done about it.

Table 1

Top 21 American Cities Rank Ordered by Who Has the Worst Gang Problem: Source is Large Sample (N = 241) of Gang Specialists in 2024

City Name	%
Chicago	46.0%
Los Angeles	26.1
New York	4.9
Detroit	3.3
Atlanta	2.9
Memphis	2.9
Baltimore	1.2
Cleveland	1.2
Columbus	1.2
Minneapolis	1.2
St. Louis	1.2
Baton Rouge	0.8
New Orleans	0.8
Portland	0.8
Washington DC	0.8
Durham	0.4
East St. Louis	0.4
Gary	0.4
Oklahoma City	0.4
Philadelphia	0.4
South Bend	0.4
Total sample	100.0%

“Aquil Basheer, founder of BUILD Program, has died in Los Angeles”

Dr. Aquil Basheer died the first week of November. He was the son of Los Angeles’ first Black firefighter and he founded The BUILD gang prevention program in 1992. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass was among those mourning Basheer’s death, calling him “an extraordinary mentor, educator, and tireless advocate for community violence intervention” in a statement posted on X. He authored the 2014 book “*Peace in the Hood: Working with Gang Members to End the Violence.*” He was in his seventies.

WHAT CITY IN AMERICA HAS THE WORST GANG PROBLEM IN 2025?

This was an open-ended item on the 2025 NGCRC Evaluation Form completed by N = 143 respondents. Many just left the question blank or made comments such as “everyone has a gang problem”, or “I don’t know”, “I am from Canada”, etc. It is a belief or perception type of variable that allows us to compare the results with findings in previous years.

The results are reported in Table 2 below.

City Nme	%
Chicago	47.9%
Los Angeles	28.6
Memphis	6.2
New York	3.8
Detroit	3.4
Atlanta	2.0
Columbus (GA)	1.3
Albany (GA)	0.6
Baltimore	0.6
Cleveland	0.6
Denver	0.6
Houston	0.6
Kansas City (MO)	0.6
Miami	0.6
Newark	0.6
New Orleans	0.6
South Bend	0.6
St. Louis	0.6
Waco	0.6
Watts	0.6

“Mike Cronin, Chicago gang investigator, has died at 81”

Former Chicago police Supt. Phil Cline said Mike Cronin “was probably the best street cop I’ve ever met”. Mike lost his left foot and part of his leg in 1968, when he was a Marine fighting in Vietnam. That would be something that kept most men off the rolls of the Chicago Police Department. But not Mike. Mike sought expeditious positive consideration using a superior mental attitude that allowed him to improvise, persevere and overcome.

He was a well known leader in the area of gang crime investigation. He worked for the Chicago Police Department from 1971 and retired as deputy chief of the department’s Narcotics and Gang Investigation Section. He died Nov. 9 from natural causes, according to his family. He was 81.

As seen in Table 2, Chicago again wins this record for having the worst gang problem in America (47.9%), compared to 28.6 percent for Los Angeles, and a remarkable low perception of only 3.8 percent for New York City. Memphis moves up to position number three on the “worst gang city” chart with 6.2 percent of the gang specialist respondents indicating that Memphis now has the worst gang problem in America.

“Founder and CEO of Non-Profit for Re-Entry Support Services Indicted on Drug Distribution Charges”

BOSTON, MA - - - The founder and CEO of Adapt & Evolve LLC, a Boston-based non-profit organization that purports to provide community re-entry support services, has been arrested and charged for allegedly distributing cocaine base (crack cocaine). According to court filings, the defendant has an extensive track-record of drug trafficking and other criminal conduct – including engaging in sex trafficking activity as well as a prior federal conviction for drug trafficking.

Javan Tooley, 36, of Dorchester and Brockton, Mass., was indicted on Sept. 18, 2025 by a federal grand jury for distribution of 28 grams or more of cocaine base. Tooley was arrested on Sept. 23, 2025 and, following an initial appearance in federal court in Boston, was ordered detained pending a hearing scheduled for Sept. 26, 2025 at 11:30 a.m.

In 2010, Tooley was convicted in U.S. District Court in Boston of distribution of cocaine, following a hand-to-hand sale of crack cocaine to undercover law enforcement. He was subsequently sentenced to five years in prison, followed by five years of supervised release for the conviction. According to court filings, following his release from federal prison in or around 2015, Tooley violated the terms of supervised release on at least five separate occasions. As a result, Tooley was sentenced to serve approximately 22 additional months of incarceration.

Additionally, according to court filings, Tooley allegedly targeted and recruited women, many of whom suffered from substance abuse disorders, to engage in commercial sex for his financial benefit and to distribute controlled substances for him. It is alleged that Tooley targeted his victims with acts of violence and provided victims with access to drugs. It is also alleged that Tooley created a climate of fear among the victims by claiming that he had connections to law enforcement and other powerful and influential officials through his non-profit. Tooley also allegedly coordinated drug transactions using the non-profit’s phone.

It is alleged that on Sept. 10 2025, Tooley distributed 100 grams of crack cocaine near Fields Corner in Dorchester, just a short distance away from Tooley’s non-profit Adapt & Evolve. Tooley is alleged to have distributed the drugs in his car, while a young child – approximately six or seven years old – was in the back seat.

Following the transaction, Tooley allegedly contacted a cooperating witness again stating that he had additional crack cocaine to sell and arranged to meet again on Sept. 23, 2025, at an area near the Roxbury District Court. Tooley was taken into custody upon his arrival and allegedly found in possession of approximately 160 grams of crack cocaine.

Some Quotes From Those Who Attended the 2025 NGCRC Gang Specialist Training Conference:

“There were plenty of options and a lot of room so I was able to attend the trainings of interest to me.”, Keenan Staten, U.S. Probation Officer, U.S. Probation, Denver, CO.

“Attention staff provided.”, Claudio Silva, Corrections Officer Investigator, Suffolk County Sheriffs Office, Riverhead, NY.

“Networking.”, Gregg Etter, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, MO.

“All of the different Law enforcement experience under one roof.”, Sebastian Ezpara, Detective, Barrington Police Department, Barrington, IL.

“Very diverse group of people-it was interesting to see their approaches to similar problems.”, Oksana Bugayoy, Assistant District Attorney, Onondaga District Attorneys Office, Syracuse, NY.

“Loved a lot of information and loved the cubs game.”, Maritza Nunez DeVillavicencio, Crime Analyst, Broward County Sheriffs Office, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

“Everything was great, I have no complaints.”, Crystall Hernandez, Community Liaison, City of Danville, Danville, VA.

“I very much enjoyed presenting and would be happy to do it again!”, Misty Wright, Executive Director of Community Safety, Louisville, KY.

“Raffles lots of options for sessions.”, Kelly Muller, U.S. Probation Officer, U.S. Probation Office, Denver, CO.

“Great conference.”, Chris Roberts, Youth and Gang Prevention Coordinator, Roanoke, VA.

“Learned valuable information to take back to my agency to hopefully implement.”, Elyce Redman, Detention Officer, Maricopa County Sheriffs Office, Phoenix, AZ.

“The amount of different classes that were available to take was awesome and allowed gang unit officers to focus in many areas that they could improve in.”, Justin Cikity, Officer, Mansfield Police Department, Mansfield, OH.

“The case studies showing the different good and bad of others investigations.”, Blake Bammann, Officer, Mansfield Police Department, Mansfield, OH.

“Hearing different experiences of people all over the country.”, Stephanie Littell, Crime Intelligence Analyst, Ohio BCI, London, OH.

“The experience of the presenters.”, Charles Ghilani, Detective, Berwyn Police Department, Berwyn, IL.

“Well organized.”, Nicholas Piraino, Detective, Berwyn Police Department, Berwyn, IL.

“I generally gained a lot of value and context to take back to my work. New ideas for data and reporting.”, Alex Glover, Cease Fire Program Manager, Portland, OR.

“Great speakers.”, Diego Noel Diaz, Detective, Berwyn Police Department, Berwyn, IL.

“Friendly and positive staff and people.”, Preston-Kurney Smith, Safety Worker, POIC, Portland, OR.

“Wealth of different areas of expertise.”, Chance Emlund, Berwyn Police Departmen, Berwyn, IL.

“Good mix of presenters and networking.”, Timothy Ponticelli Brown, Clinical Caseworker, Principles Inc, Pasadena, CA.

“So many diverse perspectives.”, Lisa Montagna, Principles Inc, Pasadena, CA.

“It’s a diverse training with different perspectives from the different agencies. Enjoyed seeing how others work.”, Franklin Brito, Detective, Plainfield Police Department, Plainfield, NJ.

“The variety of presentations and presenters, ex. Philip Swift.”, Kyle Hamre, Deputy, Cass County Sheriffs Office, Fargo, ND.

“The knowledge obtained and the networking opportunity was brilliant. The staffing were friendly and professional.”, Nicholas Pestel, Sergeant, Cass County Sheriffs Department, Fargo, ND.

“I really enjoyed the flexibility of being able to pick the classes to get the 24 hours.”, Presley Partlow, Deputy, Cass County Sheriffs Department, Fargo, ND.

“Instructors utilized time to answer questions. Snacks provided helped, great class system.”, Toure Simon, Detective, Plainfield Police Department, Plainfield, NJ.

“The best thing about this conference was networking and learning about successful programs for kids in gangs.”, Brittany York, Youth Case Manager, Davidson County Juvenile Court, Nashville, TN.

“Information that was given. Interaction and conversation.”, Jason T. White, Youth Security Supervisor Manager, Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center, Kearny, NE.

“The variety of training sessions available (and the fact that some are available on multiple days) is fantastic! The ability to take advantage of the “Criss-Cross study guide is a **great** benefit, allowing for more variety in training courses.”, Ryan M. Smith, Managing District Attorney, Drug & Gang Task Force, Lawrenceville, GA.

“The staff was warm, welcoming, and hospitable. Attendees were also very friendly and cordial. Thank you!”, Peculiar Miracle Awa, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, MO.

“The people and networking.”, Deovonta Moses, Cook County Temporary Juvenile Detention Center, Chicago, IL.

“Plenty of courses to choose from.”, Kevin Drummond, Detective, Palm Beach Sheriffs Office, West Palm Beach, FL.

“Very informative, I learned a lot, and looking forward to next year.”, Geneva Matthews, Team Leader, Cook County Temporary Juvenile Detention Center, Chicago, IL.

“Networking and amount of class options.”, Zachary Cornwall, Youth Case Manger II, Davidson County Juvenile Court, Nashville, TN.

“It was an honor to be a presenter. Learning different strategies to target gangs was also extremely helpful and motivated me greatly.”, Tyler Dailey, Detective, Harford County Sheriffs Office, Bel Air, MD.

“Networking was absolutely phenomenal, met great people, great service/great people, wonderful conversations.”, Gage Bakerj, Correctional Officer, Monroe County Sheriffs Office, Bloomington, IL.

“Learning and networking.”, Jamelle Allen, Officer, Hoover Police Department, Hoover, AL.

“Learned new things, and strategy for my job. Good people and instructors.”, Abraham DeJesus, Outreach Worker, POIC, Portland, OR.

“Overall, excellent, learned so much and hope to return in the future.”, Angel Magallanes, C.A.S.E. Coordinator, Childrens Network, San Bernardino, CA.

“Best source of new ways to investigate and eradicate gangs.” Paris Smith, Agent, Desoto County Sheriffs Office, Hernando, MS.

“There were several new classes that were added this year which were a good addition.”, Brett Grosmann, Sergeant, Desoto County Sheriffs Office, Hernando, MS.

“I feel like I learned a lot of good information to be able to go back to my facility and make positive changes/impact.”, Dennis Hamrick, Assistant Head Group Supervisor, Caliente Youth Center, Caliente, NV.

“Great speakers.”, Tommie Anderson, U.S. Probation Officer, U.S. Probation Office, Denver, CO.

“The new presenters coming w/new information.”, Rosalee Anderson, Assistant Director, City of Portland CeaseFire, Portland, OR.

“Working together to accomplish everything.”, Larry Parker, Chief Deputy, Muscogee County Sheriffs Office, Columbus, GA.

“Options for training.”, Rebekah Smith, Investigator, Richland County Sheriffs Department, Columbia, SC.

“Everything was so good.”, Nicole While, Inmate Security Deputy, Williams County Sheriffs Department, Williston, ND.

“All instructors were very knowledgeable on the topics presented.”., Marcus Walker, Sergeant, Memphis Police Department, Memphis, TN.

“Great case debriefs from across the country. Wide variety of agencies/regions requested as presenters.”, Jesse Aitchison, Detective, Waterloo Police Department, Waterloo, IA.

“Liked being able to pick our sessions, length of sessions; some short, some longer.”, Brooke Rosebrock, U.S. Pretrial Services Officer, Bay City, MI.

“Being able to present and make meaningful connections-networking connections.”, Joshua Davis, Senior Team Lead Supervisor, Pathfinders Resources, Danville, VA.

“Learning about crimes in different cities.”, Daydrena Walker-Williams, Intensive Case Manager, POIC, Portland, OR.

“The variety of training sessions to choose from with presenters from all over”, Kaera Watson, Investigator, Rockford Police Department, Rockford, IL.

“It was nice meeting everyone and hearing about the work done in different areas of the country.”, Dan-anh Tran, Clinical Therapist, PEI Kids, Lawrenceville, NJ.

“Lots of valuable information. Great classes.”, Allen Vannoy, Correctional Officer, Muscogee County Sheriffs Office, Columbus, GA.

“Location, networking, information, and staff was amazing.”, Dwayne Melton, Social Work Supervisor, Eldora State Training School, Eldora, IA.

“Thank you for the fellowship for the important work we all share in!”, Robert Fiorello, Director, Juvenile Intervention Services, PEI Kids, Lawrenceville, NJ.

“Great networking.”, Larry Williams Jr., Team Leader & Credible Messenger, Pathfinders Resources, Danville, VA.

“Incredibly friendly group, eager to learn and share what has worked for them in their jurisdiction.”, Matthew Krouse, Deputy District Attorney, Delaware County District Attorneys Office, Media, PA.

“I learned more about gangs that I didn’t know.”, Denise Fitzpatrick, Officer, Muscogee County Sheriffs Office, Columbus, GA.

“Very friendly and respective staff members. Old Dogs Can Learn New Tricks.”, Eric Dwayn Eubanks, Sergeant, Louisville Metro Department of Corrections, Louisville, KY.

“Network with other agencies.”, Joe Albert Gereb, Deputy, Bexar County Sheriffs Office, San Antonio, TX.

“Collaboration and wealth of experienced trainers.”, Angel Guzman, Director Re-Entry, Straight Ahead Ministries, Worcester, MA.

“I like how I was given the opportunity to meet new people.”, Anthony Miller, Youth Counselor Supervisor, Eldora State Training School, Eldora, IA.

“The freedom to choose the sessions that are relevant/interesting to you. Good information shared during networking.”, Sandy Sieving, Police Officer, Cincinnati Police Department, Cincinnati, OH.

“The amount of classes offered.”, Reginald L. Mobley, Corporal, Muscogee County Sheriffs Office, Columbus, GA.

“Being able to network with different agencies and learn the different trends that are occurring throughout the country. Also learning more about gang activities in the prison and jails. It was good to hear how different agencies prepare gang cases for trial.”, Cibert Diggs, Investigator, Muscogee County Sheriffs Office, Columbus, GA.

“Good information. Networking.”, Ronnie V. Salu, Intensive Case Manager, POIC, Portland, OR.

“All of the information and the meeting of people from around the United States.”, Joseph Johnson. Intelligence Agent, Lafayette Parish Sheriffs Office, Lafayette, LA.

“Ability to move freely to many classes.”, Sharon Peters, Correctional Officer, Corporal, Muscogee County Sheriffs Office, Columbus, GA.

“Networking.”, Todd Cantine, Sergeant, Ingham County Sheriffs Office, Mason, MI.

“The diversity of the group is amazing.”, Quentrell Curtis, Police Officer, Chicago Police Department, Chicago, IL.

“A lot of classes to choose from very detailed classes for learning law enforcement.”, Michael Albert Wilson, Investigator, Muscogee County Sheriffs Office, Columbus, GA.

“I appreciate the diversity of classes and instructors. It was great seeing gangs through the eyes of people who provide different services.”, Everett Deckard, Corrections Lieutenant, Floyd County Sheriffs Office, New Albany, IN.

Some NGCRC Training Sessions You Should Attend in Summer, 2026 in Chicago:

(40) “**Gang Resistance and Intervention**”, by Dwayne Melton, Social Work Supervisor, State Training School, Eldora, IA. One (1) hour
Abstract
Explore what we do here at the State Training School for Boys in Eldora that are in a gang or have a high likelihood to be involved in the gang lifestyle. We will explore different activities and discussions that we have with our students. We will also give an overview of what the State Training School for Boys is and how we work.

(41) “**Hip Hop and Gang Culture**”, by Terrance Lamont Stone, CEO, Young Visionaries Youth Leadership Academy, San Bernadino, CA. One (1) hour
Abstract
The objective of the presentation is to analyze the use of hip hop music and social media as a tool for gangs to spread their messages and branding. This includes exploring the various strategies used by gangs to gain influence and reach their targeted audience, as well as identifying the potential consequences and impacts of this type of communication on communities and individuals affected by gang-related violence and crimes. The presentation may also aim to recommend strategies for addressing these issues and mitigating the negative effects of gang influence.

(42) “**Gang Expert Testimony: Bringing Your Gang Investigation into Court**”, by Tyler Sutherland, Gang Suppression Unit, Battle Creek Police Department, Battle Creek, MI; and Jim Bailey, Battle Creek Police Department, Battle Creek, MI. Three (3) hours
Abstract
How court room testimony and gang evidence will reduce crime rates. What to say and present as a gang expert in court. How to apply your state statute of an enhanced gang crime to the evidence in your gang case. How the stored gang intelligence becomes useful in the court room. How the prosecutor and gang investigator get a case ready for courtroom prosecution.

(49) “**Get a GRIP — Nashville’s Approach to Rehabilitating the Highest-Risk Youth on Probation**”, by Shellis Hampton, Supervisor of Nashville’s Gang Resistance Intervention Program (GRIP), Nashville, TN. Two (2) hours
Abstract
Nashville’s Gang Resistance Intervention Program (GRIP) is a specialized court that provides the most intensive level of probation supervision for the city’s highest-risk youth. As recipients of the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program Grant, GRIP has expanded access to critical services for youth and their families. The program offers in-home support, mentorship, and hands-on opportunities such as a boxing and wellness program, a paid culinary arts internship, and a music production apprenticeship. This session will highlight GRIP’s successes and challenges while exploring effective strategies for engaging high-risk youth. Presenters will emphasize the collaborative effort among probation officers, service providers, schools, and attorneys that makes GRIP’s holistic approach to rehabilitation successful.

(53) “**Runaway Tren de Aragua: A Juggernaut on Rails**”, by Paul Chavez, Ph.D., Deputy Probation Officer/Training Manager, Los Angeles County Probation Department, Los Angeles, CA; and Javier Hoil, Los Angeles County Probation Department, Los Angeles, CA. Two (2) hours
Abstract:
This presentation provides a comprehensive overview of the Venezuelan criminal organization Tren de Aragua (TdA). The course will trace the gang’s evolution from a prison syndicate to a transnational criminal enterprise. Using intelligence reports, expert analysis, and investigative journalism, the class will examine TdA’s structure, criminal portfolio, and its exploitation of Venezuelan migration. Objectives of this session include: (1) Analyze the origins and evolution of Tren de Aragua’s (TdA) within Venezuela’s prison system and its rise to regional prominence, (2) Analyze the origins and evolution of Tren de Aragua’s (TdA) within Venezuela’s prison system and its rise to regional prominence, (3) Identify and categorize the primary illicit activities of TdA, (4) Evaluate the role of Venezuelan migration in facilitating the gang’s expansion, (5) Differentiate between verified TdA activities and political rhetoric mission, and (6) Introduce the counter-gang strategies used by different countries and international bodies and evaluate its effectiveness.

Huge Brazilian Raid on Rio Gang Results in 117 Dead and 81 Arrested
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL - - - According to an Associated Press story released on October 28th the most recent large scale gang raid in Brazil resulted in 117 gang members dying of gunshot wounds during the process which also resulted in the arrests of 81 living but sometimes wounded persons.

This was a quasi-military operation in that it involved the use of helicopters and armored vehicles and active duty military personnel working with law enforcement officers.

The gang involved in this operation was the Red Command which operates in Rio de Janeiro. One of the areas hit by the gang raid was the Alemao favela. A favela in Brazil is a distressed shantytown neighborhood inhabited by poor people.

This was no small operation, it took a year to plan, and in fact many American tactical operations against gangs pale in comparison in terms of force strength size. In this recent gang busting operation in Brazil there were about 2,500 police and soldiers. Five of the police officers were killed in the operation.

Once the operation was underway the gang counter-attacked by using urban guerilla warfare tactics against the government. The gang members blocked roads in northern and southeastern Rio to shut down all traffic by commandeering 70 large mass transit buses which were then positioned on the roadway and then set on fire to create the road blocks and traffic blockades.

The immediate effect was that 46 schools across the two neighborhoods were closed, and the nearby Federal University of Rio de Janeiro canceled night classes, advising everyone to seek shelter.

“33 Members of Violent Kensington Drug Trafficking Organization Charged in 41-Count Indictment”

PHILADELPHIA, PA - - - United States Attorney David Metcalf announced in October an indictment against a violent drug trafficking organization operating in the Kensington section of Philadelphia. The indictment charges 33 alleged members of the Weymouth Street Drug Trafficking Organization with conspiracy to distribute controlled substances and dozens of related offenses.

U.S. Attorney Metcalf discussed the case alongside FBI Director Kash Patel, FBI Philadelphia Special Agent in Charge Wayne Jacobs, and Philadelphia Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel, and assisting federal and state law enforcement partners.

The indictment alleges that, from about January 2016 through October 2025, the Weymouth Street Drug Trafficking Organization (“Weymouth DTO”) distributed fentanyl, heroin, crack cocaine, and cocaine on the 3100 block of Weymouth Street, one of the most prolific drug blocks in the city, functioning as an open-air drug market where illegal narcotics are sold every day and at all hours. While that block is the nucleus of the group’s alleged activity, their area of operations has extended to include the corner of F Street and Clementine Street, the corner of E Street and Wishart Street, and 3000 Potter Street.

The indictment further alleges that the Weymouth DTO uses violence to enforce its territory, including shootings, murder, and physical assaults. Members of the Weymouth DTO retaliate against witnesses that the DTO believes provide information to law enforcement and commit violent acts against members of rival drug trafficking organizations.

As alleged in the indictment, the Weymouth DTO is headed by Jose Antonio Morales Nieves, aka “Flaco,” 45, of Luquillo, Puerto Rico, who authorizes other members of the Weymouth DTO to sell drugs on his block in exchange for “rent.” Morales Nieves helps protect the members of the DTO through the threat of violent acts, performed either by himself or his associates, against others who have caused the Weymouth DTO harm or attempted to sell controlled substances in the DTO’s territory.

The indictment alleges that Ramon Roman-Montanez, aka “Viejo,” 40, of Philadelphia, is a leader of the Weymouth DTO and manages the street-level operations. He is responsible for organizing the drug shift schedule, which establishes roles and shifts for who in the Weymouth DTO will be responsible for selling drugs at what times and on what days, managing proceeds, and obtaining more controlled substances.

As alleged, Nancy Rios-Valentin, 33, also of Philadelphia, is another leader of the Weymouth DTO responsible for organizing the drug shift schedule, as well as managing and maintaining drug proceeds.

A list of all defendants and the charges against them is below.

Twenty-four defendants were arrested in coordinated operations today. Eight defendants were already in state or federal custody, and one remains at large.

“Drug traffickers who poison our communities and enforce their territory through violence will face the full force of federal law,” said Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche. “Working alongside our state and local partners, the Department of Justice will continue to dismantle these criminal networks, hold violent offenders accountable, and restore safety to neighborhoods that have suffered for far too long. I want to thank U.S. Attorney Metcalf, the FBI, and every prosecutor and agent whose dedication made today’s action possible.”

“This indictment is, by defendant, the largest federal case of this century prosecuted by our office and it attacks the very heart of the opioid crisis in the neighborhoods of Kensington,” said U.S. Attorney Metcalf. “We are committed to returning these neighborhoods to their residents and reclaiming them from drug dealers who profit from the misery of others.”

“Today, even more criminals are off the streets because of the diligent work of the FBI and our partners,” said FBI Director Kash Patel. “Over 30 people have been charged for their alleged role in drug trafficking and dozens of other offenses. These individuals were charged with distributing fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine on one of the most prolific drug blocks in Philadelphia. They were members of a violent drug trafficking organization and used violence to enforce their territory and sell drugs that poison our city streets and community. The FBI will continue our work to put an end to drug trafficking and violence in our cities.”

“There is no question our streets are safer today because of the tireless dedication and diligence of numerous federal, state, and local partners, but our work is not done,” said Wayne A. Jacobs, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Philadelphia. “The FBI, alongside our law enforcement partners at every level, will continue to serve our citizens by pursuing the dangerous offenders who shatter our communities’ sense of safety, security, and quality of life.”

“Today’s actions were the culmination of a deliberate, patient, and highly coordinated investigation into a violent criminal enterprise operating on and around Weymouth Street in Kensington,” said Philadelphia Police Commissioner Kevin J. Bethel. “This group pumped fentanyl into a community already hurting, and they used violence to protect their business. Thank you to our state and federal partners who continue to show up in Philadelphia not as visitors but as teammates: FBI Director Patel, U.S. Attorney Metcalf, FBI Philly SAC Jacobs and his team, the DEA, the Attorney General’s Office, and to our own DC Jim Kelly and the men and women of the Philadelphia Police Department’s Narcotics Bureau who did the hard work to get us here. This is One Philly in action - exactly the model Mayor Parker has demanded from day one: not turf battles, not silos, but agencies standing shoulder-to-shoulder around a single mission: protecting the people of this city.”

“Arizona Man Sentenced to Six Years in Prison for Plot Targeting Christian Churches”

SACRAMENTO, CA - - - Zimnako Salah, 46, of Phoenix, Arizona, was sentenced on November 7 in the Eastern District of California to six years in prison in connection with his plot targeting Christian churches.

In March 2025, a jury in Sacramento convicted Salah of strapping a backpack around the toilet of a Christian church in Roseville, with the intent to convey a hoax bomb threat and to obstruct the free exercise of religion of the congregants who worshipped there. The jury’s verdict included a special finding that Salah targeted the church because of the religion of the people who worshipped there, making the offense a hate crime.

According to the evidence at trial, from September to November of 2023, Salah traveled to four Christian churches in Arizona, California, and Colorado, wearing black backpacks. At two of those churches, Salah planted those backpacks, placing congregants in fear that they contained bombs. At the other two churches, Salah was confronted by security before he got the chance to plant those backpacks.

While Salah had been making bomb threats by planting backpacks in Christian churches, he had been building a bomb capable of fitting in a backpack. During a search of his storage unit, an FBI Bomb Technician seized items that an FBI Bomb Expert testified at trial served as component parts of an improvised explosive device (IED).

A search of Salah’s social media records revealed that he had consumed extremist propaganda online. Specifically, those records showed that Salah had searched for videos of “Infidels dying,” and he had watched videos depicting ISIS terrorists murdering people. In a cellphone video taken days before the crimes of conviction, Defendant Salah declared, “America. We are going to destroy it.”

“This sentencing sends a clear message: those who target people because of their faith will face the full force of federal law,” said Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “The Department of Justice will continue to protect the rights of all people of faith to worship and live free from fear, and we will hold accountable anyone who threatens or harms them.”

“Salah’s seeming ultimate goal to bomb a Christian church would have resulted in many deaths and injuries if his plan had not been thwarted,” said U.S. Attorney Eric Grant. “Thanks to the action of church security, local law enforcement, and the FBI, this defendant was stopped before he had a chance to carry out the crimes he sought to commit. Today’s sentence is justified by the history and characteristics of this defendant and serves to protect the public from this defendant. And it affirms that people of all religions should be able to worship freely and exercise their First Amendment rights in this country without fear of violence.”

“The FBI has zero tolerance for those who target Americans based on their religious beliefs,” said FBI Sacramento Special Agent in Charge Sid Patel. “Salah sought to instill fear and disrupt Christian communities across California, Colorado, and Arizona. We are grateful for the cooperation of these churches and communities, which were vital in the investigation that led to Salah’s arrest and conviction. Today’s sentencing highlights the collective efforts of law enforcement and vigilant Americans in preventing this act of terrorism.”

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with assistance from the Roseville Police Department, the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego Harbor Police Department, and the Arapahoe County (CO) Sheriff’s Office. This case was prosecuted by Special Litigation Counsel Christopher Perras and Trial Attorney Sarah Howard of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Shea Kenny for the Eastern District of California.

“Individual Associated with the 5-9 Brims Gang Charged in Connection with August 17, 2025 Mass Shooting in Crown Heights”

BROOKLYN, NY - - - A complaint was unsealed in October in federal court in Brooklyn charging Elijah Roy, also known as “Eli Spice” and “Swervo,” with crimes related to the August 17, 2025 shooting at Taste of the City Lounge in Brooklyn, New York, in which three individuals were murdered and an additional 10 were shot and injured. Specifically, Roy is charged with assault in-aid-of racketeering and with being a felon in possession of ammunition. The defendant is an associate of the 5-9 Brims, a subset of the Bloods street gang, operating in and around Brooklyn.

Roy was arrested on September 18, 2025 in North Carolina. He is scheduled to be arraigned on the complaint this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Peggy Kuo.

Joseph Nocella, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Christopher G. Raia, Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), and Jessica S. Tisch, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD) announced the charges and arrests.

“As alleged, the defendant and other associates of a violent gang unleashed gunfire in the middle of a crowded bar, creating a killing zone that, in a matter of seconds, left three people dead and 10 victims wounded,” stated United States Attorney Nocella. “Such a flagrant disregard for human life will not go unpunished and this prosecution underscores the resolve of our Office and law enforcement to eradicate gangs in the district. It is my hope that this arrest will give some comfort to the victims’ loved ones and the traumatized survivors of this heinous crime.”

Mr. Nocella expressed his appreciation to FBI/NYPD Metro Safe Streets Task Force, Brooklyn South Homicide Squad, the 71st Precinct Detective Squad, Brooklyn South Video Collection Team, and the first responders to this mass casualty shooting incident.

“Elijah Roy, a Bloods associate, allegedly participated in a mass shooting in a crowded local restaurant, killing three and significantly injuring another ten in about six seconds,” stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Raia. “This alleged act of egregious violence harmed bystanders caught in the crosshairs of a gang’s territorial dispute. These Summer Heat arrests reflect the FBI’s unwavering determination to dismantle all criminal enterprises using our city for their turf war.”

“The charges brought against Elijah Roy marks another step forward in our mission to dismantle the violent street gangs that terrorize our communities with illegal firearms,” stated NYPD Commissioner Tisch. “Alleged associates of the 5-9 Brims Gang turned a crowded club into a scene of carnage when they opened fire on their rivals, killing three people and wounding ten more. I would like to thank our NYPD investigators, including the Gun Violence Suppression Division who have carried out the most gang takedowns in the unit’s history this year, and our partners at the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the FBI for their hard work.”

As set forth in the criminal complaint, in the early morning hours of August 17, 2025, the defendant was present at Taste of the City Lounge, a restaurant and hookah bar in Brooklyn, New York. Roy was with other associates of the 5-9 Brims, including Marvin St. Louis, who died as a result of the shooting. Also present at the Lounge were individuals associated with the Folk Nation Gangster Disciples (or “GD”), a rival of the 5-9 Brims that operates in and around Brooklyn, New York, including Jamel Childs, another victim of the shooting. At approximately 3 a.m., associates of the 5-9 Brims began shooting at associates of GD, who returned fire. Roy then proceeded to shoot back towards where Childs and the group of GDs were standing. Within approximately six seconds, over 40 shots were discharged by the defendant and others into the crowded bar. As a result of the shooting three people died and ten were shot and injured.

The charges in the complaint are allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Organized Crime and Gangs Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Dana Rehnquist and Daniel J. Marcus are in charge of the prosecution with the assistance of Paralegal Specialists Samantha Ward, Paul Padilla and Elizabeth Reed.

“Multiple Members and Associates of Violent Rancho San Pedro Street Gang Arrested on Federal and State Charges of RICO and Other Violations”

LOS ANGELES, CA - - - Multiple federal and state arrest and search warrants were served in October by hundreds of law enforcement personnel targeting members and associates of one of the most active and violent gangs in the Los Angeles Harbor area, known as “Rancho San Pedro” (RSP).

A multi-year investigation by the FBI, the Los Angeles Police Department and U.S. Homeland Security Investigations led to the identification of numerous RSP subjects. RSP is known to be responsible for various criminal activities and acts of violence in and around the Los Angeles Harbor area.

“I’m proud of the years of hard work that went into this case by investigators at the federal and local level to target the upper echelon of this extremely violent gang,” said Akil Davis, the assistant director in charge of the FBI’s Los Angeles Field Office. “Today’s actions will cause a significant setback to Rancho San Pedro and their Mexican Mafia overlords and lead to safer streets for San Pedro residents.”

Eight of fourteen individuals charged in a federal criminal complaint filed in U.S. District Court were taken into custody today, as well as five defendants who are facing state charges by the Los Angeles County District Attorney. In addition, nine federal search warrants and eight state search warrants were executed at various locations in the San Pedro area.

“Our Harbor Division investigators, working closely with the FBI and HSI, methodically built a case to expose those directing this criminal enterprise,” said LAPD Chief of Police, Jim McDonnell. “This operation delivers a powerful message—we will use every tool available to protect our communities and bring violent offenders to justice.”

The Rancho San Pedro Enterprise is a multi-generational gang with a current estimated membership of approximately 500 individuals who are divided into approximately six subsets or “cliques,” including two female cliques. RSP originated in the 1970s and claims the city of San Pedro as its territory. RSP operates under the control of Mexican Mafia members who are incarcerated in California state prisons, and RSP members make payments known as “taxes” to the Mexican Mafia in return for their protection. Gang members who violate RSP or Mexican Mafia rules are subject to “discipline” in the form of assault. Serious violations, including cooperation with law enforcement, may result in death, according to the complaint.

“Today’s takedown highlights my office’s commitment to making America safe by dismantling violent street gangs,” said Acting United States Attorney Bill Essayli. “Together with our federal and local partners, we can make our communities safe for law-abiding citizens.”

The federal complaint charges thirteen defendants for their roles in a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Conspiracy (RICO) and for Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Controlled Substances. The complaint also charges a fourteenth defendant for being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm and Ammunition.

“These arrests prove the power of partnerships,” said Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan J. Hochman. “When law enforcement agencies collaborate, we are able to take violent offenders and illegal weapons off our streets. These arrests demonstrate our commitment to restoring safety and trust in every community, especially those that have suffered the most from gang violence. Working with our federal and local partners, we have sent an unequivocally clear warning to violent street gangs—the chance of getting caught and the dire prison consequences for your actions have gone way up. Continue at your own peril.”

The targets of the RICO conspiracy and others participated in the RSP Enterprise in a variety of ways. Some would issue orders from prison on behalf of the Mexican Mafia. These orders include the collection of taxes, drug distribution, firearms transfers, and decisions about who held what positions within the RSP.

Others committed or conspired to commit acts of violence to preserve and expand RSP’s criminal operations, as well as to enhance their own status within the gang. Others engaged in drug trafficking, robbery, and extortion to generate revenue for the enterprise or would illegally maintain firearms and ammunition. Still others would possess, use, and carry firearms—or direct others to—in order to commit and threaten acts of violence, including conspiracies to commit murder and assault.

“This investigation and today’s operation is just another example of how effective partnerships in policing make the communities that we serve safer,” said HSI Los Angeles Special Agent in Charge Eddy Wang. “HSI and our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners are committed to targeting the most violent gangs in the Southland.”

Members of the conspiracy possessed with the intent to distribute controlled substances, including methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, and phencyclidine (“PCP”). The complaint, which is expected to be unsealed today, details specific allegations attributed to the defendants.

“Organized criminal enterprises cannot stand up to the power of good law enforcement work,” said Attorney General Bonta. “When we work together, we get results: As a result of this collaborative investigation, we’ve taken illegal weapons and dangerous drugs like fentanyl and heroin off our streets and kept our Los Angeles communities safe from the threat of violence. I’m grateful for the hard work our Special Operations Unit and the tireless efforts of our local and federal law enforcement partners on this operation, together we are working to make California safer for all.”

If convicted of the charges in the criminal complaint, most of the federal defendants face a statutory maximum of life in prison.

This investigation was conducted by the FBI, the LAPD, HSI, and the California Department of Justice. Multiple tactical teams participated in today’s operation, to include the LAPD, the Torrance Police Department, HSI’s Special Response Team, FBI S.W.A.T. teams from Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Phoenix and San Diego, and the FBI’s Hostage Rescue Team.

“49 Members of a Violent Gang Charged with Drug Trafficking and Firearms Violations in Bayamón, Puerto Rico”

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – On September 3, 2025, a federal grand jury in the District of Puerto Rico returned an indictment charging 49 violent gang members from the municipality of Bayamón with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, possession and distribution of controlled substances, and firearms violations, announced W. Stephen Muldrow, United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico. This investigation was led by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Puerto Rico Police Bayamón Strike Force, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), with the collaboration of the U.S. Marshals Service, the Bayamón Municipal Police, the Guaynabo Municipal Police, and Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations (CBP AMO).

“Today is the anniversary of 9/11 – the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil that took nearly 3,000 innocent lives. After the attack, Americans came together in unity, resolve, and determination to confront those who sought to harm us. Today, we face another threat to our communities – one that comes to use from criminal cartels – now rightly designated as foreign terrorist organizations – flooding our streets with fentanyl, other deadly drugs, and violence. In recent years, overdose deaths, mostly from fentanyl, have averaged over 100,000 per year. Just as 9/11 demanded a national response, the toll of gang violence and drug trafficking in our communities demands action and unity,” said U.S. Attorney Muldrow. “The Department of Justice and our law enforcement partners, including those who participated in this morning’s operation, are responding and taking action to make our communities and our streets safer. We are unified and our resolve is firm.”

“This investigation, which falls directly under the Attorney General’s “Commitment to Targeting Violent Crime” is an example of how working together with our federal, state, and local partners creates an outcome that is positive for the community,” said Gordon Mallory, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives, Miami Field Division. “The men and women of ATF continuously strive to take the necessary measures to fight violent crime to include the illegal use and possession of firearms. Because of the hard work of these individuals, the residents of this community can take their neighborhood(s) back.”

The indictment alleges that from 2019 through the present, the defendants worked as part of a drug trafficking organization known as “Bin Laden Records” that distributed illegal drugs for significant financial gain and profit — including heroin, cocaine base (commonly known as “crack”), cocaine, marihuana, fentanyl, Oxycodone (commonly known as Percocet), and Alprazolam (commonly known as Xanax) – all within 1,000 feet of the Virgilio Dávila Public Housing Project (PHP), and within 1,000 feet of a public or private school and/or playground.

The charging documents further allege that when the members of the gang perceived threats to the organization and/or its members, they incurred in violent acts, including, but not limited to, murder to protect themselves and their organization. They also transported, distributed, and profited from the distribution of kilogram quantities of cocaine into the continental United States. The defendants also engaged in the trafficking of illegal firearms and ammunitions. As part of the operations of the drug points, the defendants and co-conspirators would obstruct and delay the work of law enforcement agents by obstructing the main entrance of the Virgilio Dávila PHP with shopping carts.

The defendants acted in different roles to further the goals of the drug trafficking conspiracy, including acting as leaders, drug point owners, enforcers, runners, sellers, lookouts, and facilitators.

Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) and Chief of the Gang Section Alberto López-Rocafort; Deputy Chief of the Gang Section, AUSA Teresa Zapata-Valladares; AUSA Andrés Orr Sevilla, and Puerto Rico Department of Justice Special AUSA Javier Rivera Rivera, are in charge of the prosecution of the case. If convicted on the drug trafficking charges, the defendants face a minimum sentence of 10 years to life in prison. If convicted of both the drug trafficking and the firearms charges in Count Seven, the defendants face a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years to life in prison. The defendants charged with possession of machineguns in furtherance of drug trafficking in Count Eight face a mandatory sentence of thirty years in prison to be served consecutive to any sentence imposed on the drug trafficking charges.

This case is part of Operation Take Back America a nationwide initiative that marshals the full resources of the Department of Justice to repel the invasion of illegal immigration, achieve the total elimination of cartels and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and protect our communities from the perpetrators of violent crime. Operation Take Back America streamlines efforts and resources from the Department’s Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETFs) and Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN).

“Latin Kings Gang Member Arrested in Illinois After Placing Hit on Commander at Large Border Patrol Chief Bovino”

WASHINGTON, D.C. - - - The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on October 6 announced the arrest of the criminal illegal alien and Latin Kings Gang Member who placed a bounty on the Commander at Large of the U.S. Border Patrol Chief Gregory Bovino.

On October 03, 2025, a confidential source provided information indicating a “hit” had been placed on Chief Bovino by a member of the Latin Kings Street Gang. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) identified the individual who placed the “hit” as Juan Espinoza Martinez and arrested him on October 6, 2025 in Burr Ridge, Illinois.

Juan Espinoza Martinez was associated with the Almighty Latin Kings Nation (ALKN) mother chapter in Chicago, Illinois. ICE and law enforcement partners arrested Juan Espinoza-Martinez on October 6, 2025. The Latin Kings have chapters all over the United States and in foreign countries.

HSI Chicago received a screenshot of a Snapchat conversation from a user named “Juan” appearing to place a \$2,000 bounty for information “cuando lo agarren,” which translates to “when they catch him,” and a \$10,000 reward “if you take him down.” A third response of “LK....on him” indicates the involvement of the Latin Kings.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is prosecuting Juan Espinoza Martinez with soliciting the murder of a senior law enforcement official.

“Depraved individuals like Juan Espinoza Martinez – who do not value human life and threaten law enforcement–do NOT belong in this country. We will not allow criminal gangs to put hits on U.S. government officials and our law enforcement officers,” said Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin. “Thanks to ICE and our federal law enforcement partners, this thug is off our streets and behind bars. These attacks on our brave law enforcement officers must END. Secretary Noem has been crystal clear: If you threaten or lay a hand on law enforcement, you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

“Puro Tango Blast Gang Member Sentenced to 20 Years in Federal Prison on Drug and Firearms Cases”

DALLAS, TX - - - A previously convicted felon who was a Puro Tango Blast gang member was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison for drug and gun charges, announced Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Texas Nancy E. Larson.

In February 2025, Daniel Ortiz 34, of San Antonio, Texas, pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance, one count of burglary involving controlled substances, and two counts of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Yesterday, he was sentenced to 240 months in federal prison by United States District Judge Karen Gren Scholer.

In court documents, Ortiz admitted that in January 2024, he and two codefendants burglarized a MedPlus Pharmacy located in San Antonio, Texas. On the morning of January 11, 2024, Ortiz and his codefendants used the Zello app on their cell phones to communicate before, during, and after the burglary. Zello is a cellular telephone application (app) that works as a secure push to talk radio using cellular networks and Wi-Fi. Ortiz admitted that on the morning of January 11, 2024, one of his codefendants made two false 911 calls with the intent to divert law enforcement officers away from the MedPlus Pharmacy. Following the 911 calls, Ortiz broke into the pharmacy and took quantities of codeine and other controlled substances (see photos below). Ortiz then transported the stolen drugs to the DFW area and attempted to sell them to customers.

Ortiz also admitted in court documents that on March 30, 2024, he was operating a stolen BMW X5 traveling with his girlfriend eastbound on Interstate 30 in the DFW area. Police officers attempted to conduct a traffic stop of the stolen BMW and Ortiz fled from the officers at a high rate of speed. During the pursuit, the stolen BMW driven by Ortiz struck two other vehicles as he attempted to flee from officers. Ortiz admitted that after initially alluding police officers, he exited the interstate, abandoned the stolen BMW in a residential area, and fled on foot. Ortiz admitted that when he exited the BMW, he was in possession of a Glock, model 44, .22 caliber handgun. Ortiz fled to a nearby neighborhood and unlawfully entered a residence and attempted to hide. Law enforcement agents surrounded the residence, and Ortiz surrendered after a four-hour standoff. Ortiz is a multi-convicted felon and a Puro Tango Blast (PTB) member. PTB is a violent prison gang made up primarily of Hispanic men from Texas cities.

The investigation was conducted by the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Dallas Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. Assistant United States Attorneys Rick Calvert and Luis Suarez prosecuted the case.

This investigation is part of Operation Take Back America, a nationwide initiative that marshals the full resources of the Department of Justice to repel the invasion of illegal immigration, achieve the total elimination of cartels and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and protect our communities from the perpetrators of violent crime.

“Gang Leaders Convicted For Facilitating Nationwide Prison Gang La Nuestra Familia”

SPOKANE, WA - - - Chief United States District Judge Stanley A. Bastian has handed down sentences to three local gang leaders for their roles in facilitating the criminal activities of a national prison gang called “La Nuestra Familia” (NF). Chief Judge Bastian sentenced Jacenir DaSilva of Moses Lake, Washington, to 120 months in federal prison on gun charges, Jesus Mirelez of Yakima, Washington, to 83 months in federal prison on gun charges, and Thomas Lee Weatherwax of Spokane, Washington, to 75 months in federal prison on money laundering and drug conspiracy charges, to be served after Weatherwax completes his current state prison sentence for Assault in the First Degree with a Deadly Weapon. Each defendant will also be on federal supervised release for several years after serving his custodial sentence.

Evidence showed that NF is attempting to make a targeted push to bring their “hardcore” principles and teachings to Washington State. NF doctrine dates back to the late 1960s and is encapsulated in multiple written documents, to include their own “constitution”. The rules of this criminal organization are mandatory and non-negotiable. NF leadership asserts they are engaged in this struggle for the betterment of Norteños – styled as “La Causa” or the “NF Movement”. Many individuals who have left the gang stated that La Causa is a ruse as its just about making money to perpetuate the criminal organization, which does not hesitate to use violence to achieve their objectives.

This persistent prison gang is purposely targeting minors to recruit into the gang and then indoctrinates them into their myopic way of life. These children are taught that if they are worthy Norteños, they will commit crimes and will end up in prison – so they need to follow the NF rules to be in “good standing” to comfortably serve their inevitable prison sentence. To advance further, these children will “owe a body” to advance their lifelong “careers”.

“These pervasive criminals intentionally seek out the next generation with the explicit goal of turning children into criminals (they call “soldiers”) with full knowledge that these children will be part of the gang for the rest of their lives, and commit crimes both inside and outside of prisons across the Nation to further a bill-of-goods they’ve been sold,” said Unit Chief Caitlin Baunsgard, the Assistant United States Attorney who handled this case. “The United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Washington will not stand idly by and watch this happen. We have and will continue to work tirelessly with our law enforcement partners to investigate and prosecute these predators.”

The court documents and information presented at the sentencing hearings in the case showed the following: Jacenir Amezcua DaSilva (gang name “Serio”); DaSilva is the leader of the Moses Lake Norteño set Pancho Villa Loco (“PVL”). In this leadership role, he passed along the radical teachings of NF and the importance of Norteño adherence to NF’s “14 Bonds,” which is NF’s mandatory code of conduct for Norteños. He was also named the “channel” for Grant County by NF leadership, a highly prestigious position within NF’s hierarchy. As “the channel”, DaSilva oversaw Norteño and NF interests over all the Norteño sets in his geographic area. He also facilitated any activities necessary to ensure the success of the continuation of the NF criminal enterprise, including moving money, hosting gang meetings, discussing matters of common interest with other Norteño sets, passing along messages to the “street,” and participating in NF internal “investigations” into misconduct – that is, actions taken counter to the gang’s interests. Incarcerated Norteños would also reach out to DaSilva to pass along messages of Norteño import, which would include directing activities in “the streets.” In DaSilva’s case, this included assisting in the issuance of a “kill on sight” order for an individual some members of NF believed to be an informant.

DaSilva was deeply vested in the continuation of the Norteño way of life. He ran Norteño interests in Green Hill School, a juvenile detention facility that has become a “training ground” for the next generation of Norteño gang members whom the gang has indoctrinated into hardcore NF doctrines. Multiple witnesses identified the Green Hill School as “Gladiator School” because of its large population of Sureño gang members – the sworn enemies of Norteños. Norteño youth know that at Green Hill, they will have to fight every day – and if they survive, they will be considered worthy NF gladiators. Some young Norteños have gone as far as committing new serious crimes with the specific intent to be sent to this juvenile facility.

Jesus Antonio Mirelez (gang name “Dizzy”). Mirelez was previously sentenced in federal court for his unlawful possession of two firearms and high-capacity magazines in 2022. Notably, one of the firearms Mirelez pled guilty to possessing in 2022 was linked by the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (“NIBIN”) — a national database that stores digital images of ballistic evidence, including fired bullets — to six separate shooting scenes in the Yakima Valley in 2022:

During the sentencing process in his 2022 case, he promised the Court he would not squander the opportunity to change his life. However, once he had served his 2022 sentence and was released on federal supervision, Mirelez continued his criminal conduct without pause. Only four months after being sentenced and promising change, he leaned into the radicalization of his Yakima-area Norteño gang set, La Raza (“LR”), and aligned them with the hard-core doctrine of NF. He was also appointed to a leadership position in LR – as the official “channel”. His penchant for victimizing the community also conducted. A few months later, he was drunk and mistook a random citizen as a Sureño and attempted to harm the citizen and follow the citizen into his residence. When he was rebuffed, he shot several rounds in the direction of the citizen’s residence. About a month later, Mirelez did the same thing again, resulting in a drive-by shooting that ended in him crashing his car. Both times, Mirelez ran from the police and threw away his firearms in locations where children could potentially find them, further endangering the community.

Mirelez also assisted NF members with paying their mandatory NF taxes on profits of their illicit ventures. He even enlisted his mother, Melissa Mirelez, to get word to the “streets” after his arrest about who he believed the informant in his case was – for the specific purpose of ensuring that the individual would be killed.

Thomas Lee Weatherwax (a/k/a “Wax”). While serving a 57-year state sentence for Assault in the First Degree with a Deadly Weapon wherein he fired multiple rounds at multiple individuals he mistook for Sureños, Weatherwax continued to engage in criminal activity while inside the Washington State Penitentiary (“WSP”) in Walla Walla, Washington. Weatherwax, a member of the Spokane area Norteño gang set “Red Boyz,” chose to further his Norteño career by engaging in a scheme to smuggle drugs into the WSP to sell to other inmates and then to launder those drug proceeds. Weatherwax kept meticulous records of his inventory, his profits, and the “tax” payments that were made to NF. As a result of his conduct and being a good soldier for the NF cause, he was promoted by NF leadership to a position of authority in 2023 as a member of the NF Regimental Security Department Council at the WSP (the “RSD”). In that role, Weatherwax was one of three Norteño inmates in charge of overseeing NF interests and the success of the NF movement in all Washington Department of Corrections (“DOC”) facilities. Weatherwax was appointed as the head the “finance” department. As explained by NF leadership in a message sent and received via contraband cell phones:

In his leadership role, Weatherwax oversaw “day-to-day” tasks within WSP, as well as managing overall responsibilities over all Norteños inside Washington’s DOC programs. Like a first-line supervisor in a mainstream business, Weatherwax managed his team (Norteños in the Delta Wing at WSP), and reported the team’s work to his NF supervisor:

As a leader in WSP, Weatherwax was responsible for accounting for the controlled substances present in WSP to distribute to other inmates as well as for an accounting of the money owed to NF. In addition, Weatherwax and his RSD cohorts were also in charge of big picture operations of Norteños in all Washington DOC prisons, which included discipline decisions that had been blessed by NF leadership. For example, the RSD followed the directive to “remove” a Norteño named “Joker” from good standing in a Washington DOC facility based on his perceived rule transgressions. Weatherwax then reported the order being carried out by way of a “filter” (a small secretive writing) to NF management. Washington DOC confirmed that on March 19, 2024, “Joker” was beaten in prison by multiple Norteños until a non-lethal chemical irritant was deployed by guards. Overall, Weatherwax played a crucial role in the ongoing success of NF’s continuing criminal enterprise and ability to launder drug proceeds in furtherance of their criminal mission.

United States Attorney Pete Serrano commented on the extreme danger posed by these gang members, “even removing these predators from our communities and putting them behind bars has not been enough to stop them from engaging in ongoing violent crimes and victimizing our communities”. Serrano highlighted the collaborative efforts of law enforcement to investigate this new NF threat and hold those responsible accountable: “The conduct of NF members is unconscionable, but it will always be outmatched by the dedication and commitment of the US Attorney’s Office, ATF, BOP and our federal, state and tribal partnerships. The significant sentences imposed in these cases reflects the lengths to which federal law enforcement will go to protect our communities from being preyed upon by dangerous gang members.”

ATF Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Blais highlighted the danger presented by NF: “These defendants and their criminal enterprise brought the blight of illegal guns, violence, and fear into our communities. Dangerous gangs like La Nuestra Familia think they can take root in our cities and operate freely, threatening our citizens’ safety. I am here with a clear and unwavering message: ATF and our law enforcement partners will stop at nothing to bring them and every single one of their co-conspirators to justice.”

This case is being investigated by the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (“ATF”), Violent Crime Task Force, the Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”), the United States Bureau of Prisons (“BOP”), Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (“BIA”), the Yakima Police Department (“YPD”), and the Washington State Department of Corrections (“DOC”). The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Caitlin Baunsgard and Benjamin Seal.

“Christmas Shopping Guide for Gang Members: A Short Interactive Training Session”

CHICAGO, IL - - - If you are a gang specialist and you need to visit gang members who are locked up, for example, in a snitch farm, you know how valuable their cooperation can be and it behooves you to give them ongoing motivation to continue to assist you. Almost every state has a special housing unit for prison informants. The snitch farm in Illinois is in Canton and state adult corrections staff who work there also call it the “smurf” unit, because as a stand alone secure housing unit, it is a very different world from mainline correctional housing. It is literally a prison compound inside a prison. Inmates in the smurf unit get a little bit more in terms of privileges anyhow. So maybe you want to get your gang snitch a little something special for the holiday season.

Lord knows, gang members are not easy to have to buy for if they show up on your Christmas shopping list, so here are three lessons that you need to learn if you want to be more effective at shopping on eBay. First, keep it simple, all you need to do is go to www.ebay.com for great deals on a large variety of gifts that gang members enjoy everywhere in the world today.

Children, adults, teens, all ages can buy these gang-related items from gang clothing to gang bling. The holidays are always happier when you can shop at one internet shopping site and be able to buy thousands of different items to support your gang - - - or to help startup a new gang in your home town.

In today’s modern world who cares if some of this stuff can get you killed just for wearing it in public where you might be seen by a rival gang. In fact, if you are not really in the gang and you wear it, you can be killed just as fast - - - because that is also a common cause of gang homicides: gangs call it “claiming”, but they also call it “perpetrating” and persons caught doing it will suffer from imminent violence is what history shows.

Why should anyone be concerned at all about this special ability that gangs and gang members have to spread their gang influence? After all, is it not a fact that everyone has a right to make a buck selling anything they can on Ebay? Who cares if it is gang-related? There is no specific law prohibiting the sale or distribution of gang paraphernalia, gangwear, gang artifacts, gang clothing, gang jewelry, or anything that carries and extols the image or symbol of a gang.

You need to be able to have internet access for this Christmas shopping guide experience. So get to your laptop or personal computer keyboard as we get ready to get some step-by-step guidance so we can see Santa as a Gangsta Wrapper.

For our first lesson, the modern purveyors of gang clothing clearly believe in supplying stuff you can buy for all American gangs. Let’s look at a typical entrepreneur selling gang clothing on Ebay. Go to www.ebay.com and type in the search bar “Chicago gang book latin”. What you see here are ordinary t-shirts with gang images that sell for under \$25 each and you can even get up to size 5X if you are buying it for someone that big and pick from a variety of colors. All gangs have their color patterns.

For interactive training purposes, what you want to do here is select the first gang book t-shirt you see and click on the “seller’s other items” navigation bar on the upper right side of the screen. And when there, type in the search bar “chicago gang” (without quotation marks). What you see now is the brilliant business model of this Ebay seller who provides free shipping from San Jose, California. This seller is just printing one page of the Chicago Gang Book one page at a time on t-shirts and selling them to all the gangs listed in that book or anyone else who wants to proudly wear their images.

What is the “Chicago Gang Book”? The version used in the printing of these t-shirts was published in 2018 by the Chicago Crime Commission. It was a popular gang identification guide. There was an earlier edition published in 2012 by the Chicago Crime Commission. The 2012 or first edition of the Chicago Gang Book was the subject of a lawsuit (“Suit: ‘Gang Book’ falsely labels man a gang leader”, by Naomi Nix, July 25, 2012, Chicago Tribune). In the lawsuit, Edward Arroyo claimed that the Chicago Crime Commission’s Gang Book falsely labeled him as a leader of the Spanish Gangster Disciples. The Crime Commission was simply publishing the information provided to them by survey respondents (e.g., local Chicago area police departments).

So the Ebay seller known as CBProducts308 has a large Ebay store with over 50,000 items. It is not completely gang-related, it sells a large range of items. But has great deals on a large variety of Chicago gang identification t-shirts, large selection of colors, and as mentioned up to size 5X as well. The CBProducts308 business entity is typical of a diversified Ebay site in that gang stuff is only a portion of the overall larger number of products offered for sale.

For our second lesson, let’s look at a different model of gangwear entrepreneur on Ebay, the kind of Ebay store that specializes in only gang stuff. So go back to www.ebay.com and type in the search bar: “gangster disciple” with no quotation marks. What pops up are a large number of various types of gang clothing for those who are involved with the Gangster Disciples - - - one of the largest gangs in America. Here you see all kinds of different t-shirts, that are authentic in all details regarding gang identification. There are even items for the female gang members of the GD set - - - they are called SOS, Sisters of the Struggle, or Intellectual Sisters.

But what I want you to do, for interactive training purposes, is to hit the control and “F” keys simultaneously to bring up your search bar. Inside the search bar for this page type in “slippers”. This will bring up some really cute Gangster Disciple Nation GD 74 Men’s Indoor Slippers for only \$49.99 and you get free delivery. What GD gang member would not enjoy wearing these comfortable looking and stylish slippers adorned with GD gang slogans? Clearly, they are designed to look impressive and authoritative, and for only \$49.99.

Anyhow, the important thing here is note the name of this Ebay seller is “Bangland” and I want you to now click on the top right navigation bar for the seller’s other items. Bangland offers convenient free shipping of any of its wide array of contemporary American gang clothing items. It illustrates another type of Ebay entrepreneur: in this case the foreign actor, from Communist China, specifically Fujian - - - the coastal southeast province of China. So these are gang products which are produced and manufactured to look 100% authentic in China and shipped to buyers in American cities.

Bangland is an Ebay seller that sells to a large number of gang identities not just the Gangster Disciples. There are authentic Vice Lord, Crips, Bloods, Surenos, Nortenos, Latin Kings, and other gangs that will enjoy the attractive gifts available here. Hoodies, tennis shoes, hats and caps, windbreakers, note books, all stylized with accurate gang identifying markings and symbols means this one site can be used to buy gifts for many different large American gangs today.

Now for the third lesson to help you shop more effectively for gang members on your Christmas shopping list, let us look at the business model where the online Ebay store sells only items from one particular specific gang. For this exercise, go to www.ebay.com and in the search bar type the phrase “hells angels ball peen hammer pin”. Those who study the Hell’s Angels know that the ball-peen hammer has special significance as an identifier. So when the stylish ball peen hammer pin entitled Hells Angels Hartford Support Pin Ball Peen Hammer appears on your screen, selling for \$15.81 with free delivery in a couple days, select it with your mouse or navigation method.

Now you see the eBay seller called “hartford81store”, it has a lot of positive feedback, and a 100% positive rating. So you get what you pay for here is the guidance from the Ebay platform. But for the purpose of studying this kind of Ebay store, go to the upper right corner and use the navigation button for “seller’s other items”. Now we see that this is a Hell’s Angels merchandise only type of store. There are lots of items that you can buy for Christmas gifts if you have any Hell’s Angels on your shopping list. And these are all very affordable, generally speaking.

Finally, if you did have a Hell’s Angels member or associate on your shopping list, say it was an in-law who is really an outlaw whom you really wish you did not have to get a gift for, not an uncommon shopping situation in the modern world we live in. The spirit of Christmas is in the giving, remember that. So what to do? For that person, easy, buy them something spicy and different than that they are used to. Buy them colors from the opposition. How, easy, go to www.ebay.com and type in the search bar “Outlaws MC Chicago Biker Vest Men’s Black Leather”.

Okay, so maybe the person on your Christmas shopping list is not in a street gang, nor in a motorcycle gang, but who is still someone functioning on the outskirts of civil society by manifesting a pattern of extremist behavior. We can still help you pick the perfect gift on eBay. Here is our advice: just go to www.ebay.com and in the search bar type in the word “antifa” without the quotation marks. Now we see a large number of cheap and affordable gifts for that special person on your Christmas shopping list - - - and again, we see shirts, pins, books, including “how to” books and comic books, hats, flags and just a horribly long list of special gifts for that special person on your shopping list.

So there you have it. Three easy lessons giving shopping tips for buying gifts that will bring much happiness to the gang bangers on your Christmas shopping list. And we have shown you examples for street gangs, motorcycle gangs, and extremist groups.

“Leader of White Supremacist Group Pleads Guilty to Soliciting Hate Crimes and Sending Instructions to Make Bombs and Ricin”

BROOKLYN, NY - - - On November 17, at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, Georgian national Michail Chkhikvishvili, also known as “Mishka,” “Michael,” “Commander Butcher,” and “Butcher,” pleaded guilty to soliciting hate crimes and sending instructions to make bombs and ricin. Chkhikvishvili was a leader of Maniac Murder Cult, an international racially motivated violent extremist group. Chkhikvishvili recruited people to commit violent acts in furtherance of Maniac Murder Cult’s ideologies, including planning and soliciting a mass casualty attack in New York City. In May 2025, Chkhikvishvili was extradited from Moldova to the Eastern District of New York.

“The outstanding investigative work in this case saved untold lives and underscores the crucial behind-the-scenes activity of our federal law enforcement agents,” said Attorney General Pamela Bondi. “Violent, nihilistic, racist groups like these are an ongoing threat to the American people – our vigilance will not waver as we protect our citizens.”

“With this guilty plea, this defendant admits to a horrific plot targeting Jewish people and racial minorities and even planned to poison children with candy around the holidays,” said FBI Director Kash Patel. “The defendant was extradited from Moldova to face charges. This case shows once more that no matter where you are, if you try to harm our citizens the FBI and our partners will find you and bring you to justice.”

“Chkhikvishvili’s monstrous plots and propaganda calling for racially motivated violence against civilians, including children, posed a grave threat to public safety,” said Assistant Attorney General John A. Eisenberg. “Unfortunately, his efforts on behalf of the aptly named Maniac Murder Cult in fact caused mayhem and death. We condemn his despicable ideology and will use every tool at our disposal to bring such predators to justice.”

“The defendant has admitted his vile actions, including recruiting others to commit acts of violence against Jewish and racial minority children. His incitement of hate crimes resulted in real-world violence,” said U.S. Attorney Joseph Nocella, Jr. “This prosecution shows that our Office will protect all communities from evildoers like the defendant from wherever they spew their hate.”

In June 2022, Chkhikvishvili traveled to Brooklyn, New York. Beginning as early as July 2022, Chkhikvishvili repeatedly encouraged others, primarily via the encrypted messaging application Telegram, to commit violent hate crimes and other acts of violence on behalf of Maniac Murder Cult. This included soliciting acts of mass violence in New York from an individual who, unbeknownst to Chkhikvishvili, was an undercover FBI employee (the UC).

Since approximately September 2021, Chkhikvishvili has distributed a manifesto titled the “Hater’s Handbook” to Maniac Murder Cult members and others. The Hater’s Handbook encourages people to commit acts of mass violence. For example, the Hater’s Handbook encourages its readers to commit school shootings.

Beginning in approximately November 2023, Chkhikvishvili solicited the UC to commit violent crimes, such as bombings and arsons, for the purpose of harming racial minorities, Jewish individuals and others. In November 2023, Chkhikvishvili began planning a mass casualty attack in New York City to take place on New Year’s Eve. The scheme involved having an individual dress up as Santa Claus and hand out candy laced with poison to racial minorities. In January, the scheme evolved and Chkhikvishvili specifically directed the UC to target the Jewish community, Jewish schools, and Jewish children in Brooklyn with poison. Chkhikvishvili sent detailed manuals about creating and mixing lethal poisons and gases, including ricin.

Chkhikvishvili’s encouragement of violence have resulted in multiple attacks and killings around the world:

In January 2025, a 17-year-old student killed one individual and injured another before dying by suicide inside Antioch High School in Nashville, Tennessee. The attacker livestreamed part of the attack. Prior to the attack, in an audio recording posted online and attributed to him, the attacker claimed he was taking action on behalf of Maniac Murder Cult and at least one other group. The attacker’s manifesto explicitly mentioned

In August 2024, an individual livestreamed himself stabbing approximately five people outside of a mosque in Eskisehir, Turkey, wearing a tactical vest bearing Nazi symbols. A manifesto attributed to the attacker included explicit references to Chkhikvishvili and to violent statements made by him. Before the attack, the attacker also distributed a link to the Hater’s Handbook, authored by Chkhikvishvili, and other violent propaganda.

Chkhikvishvili faces a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison.

The FBI’s New York Joint Terrorism Task Force investigated the case. The task force consists of investigators and analysts from the FBI, the New York City Police Department, and over 50 other federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the Department of State, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Justice Department’s Office of International Affairs, and the government of Moldova for their crucial assistance in securing Chkhikvishvili’s arrest and extradition.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s National Security and Cybercrime Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Ellen H. Sise and Andrew D. Reich are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Trial Attorney Justin Sher of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section and Paralegal Specialists Wayne Colon and Rebecca Roth.

“Omaha Gang Member Sentenced to 220 Months for Fentanyl and Firearm Crimes”

OMAHA, NE - - - United States Attorney Lesley A. Woods announced that Clifford Wright III, 36, of Omaha, Nebraska, was sentenced on September 10, 2025, in federal court in Omaha for possession with intent to distribute fentanyl, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, and felon in possession of a firearm. Chief United States District Judge Robert F. Rossiter, Jr. sentenced Wright to a total of 197 months’ imprisonment. There is no parole in the federal system. After Wright’s release from prison, he will begin a 5-year term of supervised release. Chief Judge Rossiter also sentenced Wright to a consecutive 23 months’ imprisonment for violating his supervised release from a 2021 conviction for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

A jury convicted Wright of the three charges on June 6, 2025, after a seven-day trial. The evidence at trial established Wright, a documented member of the 29th Street Bloods in Omaha, who was observed on surveillance footage at a crowded gas station in north Omaha on October 31, 2022, making apparent hand-to-hand drug transactions from his vehicle. Shots erupted toward the crowded parking lot from across the street and Wright exited his vehicle holding a handgun, but his handgun appeared to malfunction or not fire.

Omaha police identified Wright based upon prior investigations and their knowledge of Wright as a gang member. Wright has two prior convictions in federal court for illegal firearm possession, including the conviction for which he was on supervised release at the time.

Wright was arrested on November 2, 2022. A search of a safe belonging to Wright pursuant to a warrant uncovered approximately 850 fentanyl pills and three loaded handguns, including a 9mm handgun that was visually consistent with the handgun Wright tried to fire at the gas station on October 31, 2022. The 9mm was the only handgun from the safe that had a round in the chamber. Two of the handguns had been reported stolen, including one stolen from the inventory of a federal firearms licensee in Omaha during a burglary.

Review of extracted data from Wright’s cell phone showed that he had been dealing drugs dating back to February 2022, the month after he was most recently released from federal prison. Wright appeared to also be selling cocaine, ecstasy pills, and marijuana, based upon his text messages.

This case was investigated by the Omaha Police Department. An agent from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives also testified as a firearms expert at trial. This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

“Waterbury Gang Member Sentenced to Life in Federal Prison”

WATERBURY, CT - - - MALIK BAYON, also known as “Pop” and “Dirt,” 29, was sentenced September 18 by U.S. District Judge Kari A. Dooley in Bridgeport to life in prison, and a mandatory five-year consecutive term of imprisonment, for offenses related to his involvement in the 960 gang, a violent Waterbury street gang.

This announcement was made by David X. Sullivan, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut; Maureen T. Platt, State’s Attorney for the Waterbury Judicial District; P.J. O’Brien, Special Agent in Charge of the New Haven Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Bryan DiGirolamo, Acting Special Agent in Charge, ATF Boston Field Division; and Waterbury Police Chief Fernando C. Spagnolo.

According to court documents and statements made in court, in an effort to address drug trafficking and related violence in Waterbury, the FBI, ATF, and Waterbury Police have been investigating multiple Waterbury-based groups, including the 960 gang. On September 14, 2021, a federal grand jury in Hartford returned a 36-count indictment charging Bayon and 15 other 960 gang members with various offenses, including racketeering, murder, attempted murder and assault, firearm possession, narcotics trafficking, and obstruction of justice offenses.

According to the evidence presented during his trial:

On October 31, 2017, Bayon and other 960 members were involved in a drive-by shooting in the area of Porter Street and Bank Street in Waterbury in an attempt to murder members of a rival gang. An individual was shot and wounded in the shooting. Investigators recovered 17 shell casings from four different firearms at the scene.

On November 22, 2017, Bayon and 960 members Zaekwon McDaniel and Tahjay Love shot at Clarence Lewis and Antonio Santos who were in a car at a restaurant in Waterbury. Lewis sped from the scene at a high rate of speed and crashed into a house at the intersection of Wolcott Street and Dallas Avenue in Waterbury. Lewis, 22, and Santos, 20, were pronounced dead at the scene. Shell casings connected two of firearms used during the shooting to the shooting that occurred on October 31, 2017.

Some of the Free Social Networking Receptions You Can Attend at the NGCRC’s 2025 Training Conference:

The Corrections/Law Enforcement/Prosecution Social Network Reception:

This is available only to persons who work in law enforcement/corrections agencies. How do you sign up? Through the Registration Form itself or use the special request form below. If you do, you are in and a ticket will be in your registration file folder when you arrive at the conference. No ticket, no entrance to the event. It is headed up by Dr. Gregg W. Etter (University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, MO) and Ken Davis, NGCRC staff. At this year’s training conference we are sponsoring an “Agency Patch Exchange” within the networking function designed for corrections and law enforcement personnel. If you are interested, please secure some of your agency’s patches and bring them with you. We will have a time set aside for this at the Corrections/Law Enforcement Network function. So bring your appetite and your patches and have a great time! As always, there is no extra “charge” for signing up for receptions that may also provide you with snacks, beverages, etc. It is something you are automatically entitled to as a part of your conference registration fee. It is a ticketed event so you do need to sign up for it in advance. And as is the NGCRC tradition, of course, there are “door prizes” at this reception. The Corrections/Law Enforcement Reception is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 5, 2025.

The Probation Officers/Court Staff Reception:

by Dr Andy Bain and Irene Paredes, NGCRC Staff. One (1) hour. Monday noon. Door prizes.

Abstract
This is a special reception for probation officers (juvenile and adult - - - county, state, and federal) and court personnel. It is held during the lunch hour on Monday. The purpose is to express appreciation to probabion officers for their service in upholding the rule of law. If you are a probabion officer or work for the court, come and attend, find a warm, friendly environment. Door prizes. Great chances to network and mingle. Learn something new, meet somebody new. Sponsored by the NGCRC staff, you will feel appreciated here. Sign up for it on your registration form.

Bios
TBA. The bios will be posted at the official conference website along with more information about this reception: <https://ngcrc.com/conference.html>

The Prevention/Intervention/Counseling Network Reception:

This is available to anyone attending the conference. Just sign up for it on your registration form. This is one of the exciting features of the 2026 Conference. The purpose is to allow specialized networking among those persons in schools, private programs, and those in the helping professions who work directly with gang members in a prevention, intervention, or counseling capacity. Come prepared to meet other like-minded persons from a wide variety of occupational backgrounds; come prepared to make some new friends who will last a life time. The 2026 NGCRC Prevention/Intervention/Counseling Network Reception is open to anyone signed up for the conference, there is a “check list” on the registration form itself: you need to check “yes” that you want to attend the Prevention/Intervention/Counseling Networking Reception. You get one (1) hour of session attendance credit for it. It occurs, however, in the early evening. Stay tuned for further details as they will be announced here at this website. As always, there is no extra “charge” for signing up for receptions that may also provide you with food, beverages, etc. It is something you are automatically entitled to as a part of your conference registration fee. The NGCRC staff host for this year’s reception are: Martha Wall-Whitfield, Ph.D., Principal, Arkansas Juvenile Assessment and Treatment Center, Bryant, AR and TBA, NGCRC Staff. The Prevention/Intervention/Counseling Reception is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. Monday, August 3rd, 2026. Sign up for it on your registration form.

THE CHRISTIAN GANG SPECIALIST RECEPTION:

This is available only to persons registered for the conference. This will be held during an “off time” in the regular conference schedule. If you answered “YES” to the question on your registration form “I am interested in networking with Christian gang specialists while at this conference”, then your I.D. Badge is already coded with a special ticket code that allows you into this reception. If you answered “NO” or left the quastion blank, it was assumed you are not interested. If you fall into the latter category, the Session Attendance Simulation Survey will ask you a second time if you want to be added to the group of persons who will attend this special networking reception. As we need to plan on how many are attending, no “walk ins” will be allowed. And as is the NGCRC tradition, of course, there are “door prizes” at this reception. Come prepared for some amazing testimony. The chairs of the 2026 NGCRC Christian Gang Specialist Reception are: Dr. Martha Wall-Whitfield and Dr. George Knox. The format this year will likely be a light luncheon format (we are still working out specific arrangements: so stay tuned to this website for further details and developments). As always, there is no extra “charge” for signing up for receptions that may also provide you with food, beverages, etc. It is something you are automatically entitled to as a part of your conference registration fee. The Christian Gang Specialist Networking Reception is scheduled for Noon, Tuesday, August 4th, 2026.

The NGCRC Video Training Page for the 2026 Training Program:

While the main NGCRC gang training conference is a traditional face-to-face meeting in a standard classroom or training room equipped with a projection screen and powerpoint equipment, and in a friendly secure environment where you can socially interact with other persons attending the conference and network with the trainers and presenters, there is a backup training system we developed during COVID that is very useful. You can get credit towards the 2026 program by completing any of its video-based training sessions. The NGCRC Videopage is a service you receive the moment you sign up for the 2026 NGCRC training conference. Once you get the password, you are up and running at the NGCRC Videopage. That’s all you need to use it, is the password. When you register, you receive a special letter from the NGCRC called the Confirmation of Conference Registration letter. It also contains your password for using the Videopage. The “Videopage” is a special secured training portal at the NGCRC website. It allows you to accumulate training credit using a laptop or PC, just by navigating to the videopage. It is not “interactive”. You have no face-to-face contact with the presenters. The presenter does not see you or interact with you. You cannot raise your hand and ask the presenter a question as you could in a regular classroom based training session. So there are classroom based sessions and the schedule for these is posted at the website (<https://ngcrc.com/schedule.html>). And then there are the smaller set of choices available only through the video training program and are described in detail at the videopage website (<https://ngcrc.com/videopage.html>). When you sign up for non-certification or certification, you automatically get access to both options. And you can mix and match (some video based, some classroom based). You will need to have a valid password provided to you by the NGCRC to access and use the training videos provided at the video page: <https://ngcrc.com/videopage.html> There are nearly 30 hours of useful gang training content available from the NGCRC Videopage alone.

Q: Where do we go to look at the NGCRC VideoPage?
A: <https://ngcrc.com/videopage.html>

Q: What do I do if my password does not work?
A: Call the NGCRC Helpline (708) 258-9111

Contact Information for the NGCRC:

Phone: (708) 258-9111
Fax: (708) 258-9546
Email: gangcrime@aol.com

“Five San Fernando Valley Street Gang Affiliates Arrested on Federal Complaint Alleging Murder-for-Hire Plot Against Local Crime Boss”

LOS ANGELES, CA - - - Five members and associates of the San Fernando Valley-based Vanowen Street Locos and Elmwood Rifa 13 gangs were arrested on September 30 on federal criminal complaints – four of them charged with taking part in a murder-for-hire plot targeting an Armenian Organized Crime boss but which instead resulted in his significant other getting shot and wounded in front of their two young children earlier this year. The defendants arrested today are: Carlos Armando Ochoa Grimaldi, 47, a.k.a. “Spanky,” of Sylmar; Christopher Ayala, 29, a.k.a. “Hits,” of Sylmar; Edir De La Cruz, 34, a.k.a. “Temper,” of Van Nuys; and Maria de Jesus Mares, 39, a.k.a. “Mary Oceans,” of Van Nuys. Also arrested on a complaint today was Vanowen Street Locos gang member Jose de Jesus Gonzalez, Jr., 49, a.k.a. “Listo,” of Llano, who is separately charged in connection with the August 2023 shooting of Vahan Harutyunyan, 49, of Hollywood, Florida, who is now in federal custody on kidnapping charges. Approximately five firearms, a silencer, firearm parts, and over 1,000 rounds of ammunition were seized during the search warrant services. Grimaldi, Ayala, De La Cruz, and Mares are charged with use of interstate commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire. Gonzalez is charged with conspiracy to violate the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. The defendants are expected to make their initial appearances this afternoon in United States District Court in Los Angeles. According to affidavits filed with the complaints, Armenian Organized Crime, a Russian Mafia and Mexican Mafia-affiliated transnational criminal organization, has made Los Angeles County a center of its U.S. operations. Since 2022, two local leaders within the organization, also known as avtoritet, which in Russian means “authority,” allegedly have engaged in a power struggle for control in their territory, resulting in multiple assaults, murder attempts, and a kidnapping. Robert Amiryan, 47, of Hollywood, an avtoritet, has been the target of an assault and attempted murders ordered by a rival avtoritet, Ara Artuni, 41, of Porter Ranch. Amiryan and Artuni are in federal custody after being charged earlier this year with a series of crimes and are scheduled to go on trial in December 2025 and August 2026, respectively. Artuni is principally charged with ordering the murder of Amiryan on multiple occasions in 2023. In retaliation, Amiryan conspired with members of his own criminal organization to kidnap and torture one of Artuni’s associates in June 2023. In early 2025, Grimaldi, Ayala, De La Cruz, and others began stalking Amiryan and renewed efforts to kill him. For example, in February 2025, Ayala informed De La Cruz that he and others were still working “on th[e] job” to kill Amiryan. On March 14, 2025, Grimaldi and Vahagn Stepanyan, 40, of Burbank, shot and wounded Amiryan’s significant other as she arrived home in her car with their two children. Stepanyan is currently in federal custody and is charged with racketeering, fraud, and firearms offenses. After the shooting, Mares called De La Cruz and reported that the “job [was] done,” and Stepanyan would pay her \$50,000 for her role as the getaway driver, according to court documents. In the days afterward, Mares told De La Cruz, that she believed she would not be getting paid because “it was the wife not him.” Stepanyan ultimately paid Mares a reduced rate because Amiryan was not killed. A complaint contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in court. If convicted, the defendants would face a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison. The Los Angeles Police Department Major Crimes Division – Transnational Organized Crime Section; the Burbank Police Department; Homeland Security Investigation’s (HSI) Northridge and Ventura offices; the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG); IRS Criminal Investigation; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are investigating this matter. “Two of Three New Bedford, Massachusetts Men Charged for February 2024 Saco Shooting Plead Guilty” PORTLAND, ME - - - Two New Bedford, Massachusetts men pleaded guilty on September 25 in U.S. District Court in Portland to a three-count superseding indictment that included charges for conspiring to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute cocaine, perpetrating a drive-by shooting, and using a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime. Joshua Estrada (aka “Mac”), 20, and Yancarlos Abrante (aka “Glizzy”), 22, pleaded guilty to the superseding indictment returned by a federal grand jury on March 19, 2025. According to court records, on February 9, 2024, Estrada and Abrante fired at least five rounds from a 9mm handgun into another vehicle in a drug trade dispute. Shortly after they fired on their drug rivals and fled the scene, they drove their vehicle against traffic and through a red light, crashing into another passenger vehicle and a school bus. Video footage captured by another driver who witnessed the accident showed them exiting their vehicle and fleeing the scene on foot. Court records reflect that Estrada, Abrante and others had been trafficking cocaine in and around Saco and Biddeford since at least January 2024. A third defendant, Jason Johnson-Rivera (aka “Ouda”), 20, is expected to go to trial later this year. “Today’s guilty pleas by Joshua Estrada and Yancarlos Abrante are the result of a tireless and cooperative investigation by local, state and federal law enforcement,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Craig M. Wolff. “The U.S. Attorney’s Office and its partners are united in bringing to justice those who distribute drugs and commit acts of violence in this state.” “These two violent, dangerous men committed a brazen, drive-by shooting in Saco in broad daylight following a dispute over the cocaine they were trafficking,” said Ted E. Docks, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Boston Division. “Their unabashed criminal behavior put innocent lives at risk, all so they could maintain their hold on their drug territory and keep the cash rolling in. This case underscores how the FBI’s Southern Maine Gang Task Force and our law enforcement partners are working together to target and dismantle the violent drug gangs wreaking so much havoc in our communities, just to make money and a name for themselves on the street.” Estrada and Abrante face a mandatory minimum prison sentence of 20 years with a maximum of life, a fine of up to \$10 million, and not less than five years of supervised release. Both defendants will be sentenced after the completion of a presentence investigative report by the U.S. Probation Office. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

THE 2026 NGCRC’s 29th INTERNATIONAL GANG SPECIALIST
TRAINING PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM:



Please PRINT neatly or type your full name with any title that you want to appear on your official conference name badge and certificates (if you are registering for certification):

MAIL AND CONTACT INFORMATION: Where we will mail you a Confirmation of Registration letter for the conference, and fax the same material to you:

Have a Question About Training Tracks?

You select one (1) training track if you are registering for Certification. There are 30 tracks to choose from. Feel free to call the NGCRC helpline (708) 258-9111 if you have any questions. You are allowed to sign up for the Double Major (2 tracks), just check this off on the form and pay the extra \$90.

Name:

Agency:

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

Telephone Info:

Area Code

Tel #:

Fax Number:

Area Code

Fax #:

Email Address:

The NGCRC reserves the right to refuse service to anyone: Towards this end we must ask that all persons registering for the conference sign and by their signature acknowledge the Official Policy of the NGCRC which is as follows - *In order to provide the safest and most educational environment, the National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) works to ensure that all participants at our conference are law-abiding individuals who have gathered to collect and share information about gangs and crime, in order to reduce and possibly eliminate the problems associated with gang activity. Therefore, it is our policy that no individuals or groups will be permitted at our conference who have links to gangs or other aberrant groups and no one will be permitted to provoke or distract our participants from the most meaningful learning environment. The National Gang Crime Research Center (NGCRC) reserves the right to refuse attendance to any person or persons suspected of or actually displaying gang affiliations. Furthermore, we reserve the right to refuse attendance to any individual(s) determined to be disruptive or instigating a negative or inappropriate presence or who is determined to disrupt the sharing of information in the most effective learning environment. I have also read and understand the refund policy published by the NGCRC. I attest that I am at least 18 years of age as of this date.* I hereby acknowledge by my signature the above policies of the NGCRC: _____

I am registering for (check appropriate box):

Non-certification

Certification

I would like to attend the Christian Gang Specialist Reception ☐ Yes ☐ No (if blank, we assume you mean “NO”)

I work in either law enforcement or corrections and I would like to attend the Law Enforcement and Corrections Social Networking Reception:

☐ Yes ☐ No (if blank, we assume you mean “NO”)

(see reverse side for list of options)

I want to attend the Intervention/Prevention/Counseling Gang Specialist Networking Reception ☐ Yes ☐ No

I work in probation or court services and want to attend the Probation/Court Services Reception. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I want to attend one of the Baseball Networking Events. ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, pick one you want to attend: ☐ Mon ☐ Tues)

Complete this section ONLY if you are registering for Certification:

Print the name of the Training Track you are registering for: _____

I have been previously completed Certification training by the NGCRC. ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, what years: _____

I am also signing up for the Double Major. ☐ Yes ☐ No (if yes, print 2nd track here: _____)

Group Discount Code: _____ NOTE FOR ALL REGISTRATIONS: Your registration fee does not cover your hotel room or parking or meals. Your registration fee covers only the training itself. NOTE: Payment must be received by the NGCRC prior to the conference itself unless the NGCRC agrees to the terms of any alternative arrangement (in writing).

PAYMENT METHOD: Credit Card, checks, or money orders are accepted for payment. No personal checks will be accepted for on-site payment of conference registration fees. We do accept credit card payments by mail and fax and phone.

Payment enclosed in check or money order made payable to “National Gang Crime Research Center” in amount of \$ _____

VISA, MasterCard, American Express or Discover (Circle one).

Card number: _____

Expiration date: Month _____ Year: _____ CCV# _____

Name on card: (printed): _____ Amount you authorize to charge (total): \$ _____

Your Signature: _____ Your Telephone # to Call if any Questions: _____

Billing Address for the card holder(Printed): (street address) _____

Zip Code for the Billing Address: _____

Call (708) 258-9111 if you need the NGCRC F.E.I.N. (tax number) or our Merchant Number for credit card payments. Also, call (708) 258-9111 if you want to provide credit card info by verbal rather than written transmission.

Registration forms can be faxed to the NGCRC, the Fax Number is (708) 258-9546.

The conference is being held August 3-5, 2026 at the Westin Michigan Avenue Hotel, 909 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60619. The toll free number for the Central Reservations Call Center is: 1 (888) 627-8385. When making reservations, the “code” for the conference is “NGCRC Gang Conference”. They need that “code” to give you the reduced hotel rates.

Make checks or money orders payable to “National Gang Crime Research Center”. Make sure to mail a copy of your registration with the payment so that proper credit can be made to your registration. Send registration forms and payment to: The 2026 Conference Processing Center, National Gang Crime Research Center, PO Box 990, Peotone, IL 60468-0990.

PROCEDURE FOR REGISTERING FOR THE NGCRC
CONFERENCE BY MEANS OF A PURCHASE ORDER

This explains the new streamlined policy and procedure for persons from government agencies who seek to register for the 2026 NGCRC Training Conference by means of a Purchase Order or related type of procurement method. There are three main provisions of this policy and procedure and they are as follows:

1. A purchase order number must be provided on the form used by the Agency, and it must bear a signature. It should reflect that the payee will be the NGCRC and the form should also reflect the specific amount payable to the NGCRC (call if you have any questions in this regard). Please provide any special billing information (e.g., who specifically we should make the Invoice out to and where specifically we should mail the Invoice to).
2. Fax your registration forms and the Purchase Order to the NGCRC ASAP. The NGCRC fax number is (708) 258-9546. After faxing it in, simply complete the registration form and attach a purchase order and mail it in ASAP to: National Gang Crime Research Center, 2026 Conference Processing Center, PO Box 990, Peotone, IL 60468. We do need it faxed and mailed as well. Please note that the deadline for Purchase Orders faxed to the NGCRC is July 31, 2026. Please note that the NGCRC will not accept “onsite” registrations by means of oral declarations that “my agency is going to pay for it”, and will not accept on-site purchase orders. If you are planning to pay by means of Purchase Order, then it must be done before the conference.
3. Upon receipt of the registration form(s) and the purchase order form (or a letter head version) the NGCRC will register the persons(s) and issue their agency an Invoice. At the same time, the NGCRC will send individual letters confirming the registration to those persons. There are no “on-site” registration options for payment by means of a Purchase Order.

Those registering by Purchase Order or by means of a credit card can simply fax their registrations, the fax number for the NGCRC is (708) 258-9546.

Schedule of Amount to Pay
for Conference Registration

ADVANCE REGISTRATION PERIODS:
Paying on or before November 30, 2025: Non-Certification \$400, Certification \$450
Paying on or after December 1, 2025 and on or before December 31, 2025: Non-Certification \$450, Certification \$500

EARLY REGISTRATION PERIODS:
Paying on or after January, 2026 and on or before January 31, 2026: Non-Certification \$500, Certification \$550
Paying on or after February 1, 2026 and on or before February 28, 2026: Non-Certification \$550, Certification \$600
Paying on or after March 1, 2026 and on or before March 31, 2026: Non-Certification \$600, Certification \$650

REGULAR REGISTRATION PERIODS:
Paying on or after April 1, 2026 and on or before April 30, 2026: Non-Certification \$650, Certification \$700
Paying on or after May 1, 2026 and on or before May 31, 2026: Non-Certification \$700, Certification \$750
Paying on or after June 1, 2026 and on or before June 30, 2026: Non-Certification \$750, Certification \$800

LATE REGISTRATION PERIOD:
Paying on or after July 1, 2026 and on or before July 31, 2026: Non-Certification \$800, Certification \$850

LAST MINUTE AND ONSITE REGISTRATION: A “last minute” or Onsite Registration is any registration made on or after August 1, 2026.
Paying On-Site (If slots are available): Non-Certification \$950, Certification \$1000

Last minute registrations must be paid up at the time of registration. There is no guarantee that actual “on site” registration slots will be available. In 2025 registrations closed a couple weeks before the conference date. We are anticipating that for 2026 we will again need to close registrations early due to filling all the available training slots Each training slot means a bag of goodies and take home reference materials for each person registering, we prep only 500 bags and close registrations to avoid SRO problems.

Multiple Registration Discounts Available:

Any agency registering three persons, simultaneously, is eligible for a \$100 discount off the total training cost (by which we mean a \$33.33 discount for each of the three). Additional discounts would apply for those agencies registering four or more persons (simultaneously) for training. An agency registering four or more persons, simultaneously, will qualify for a Group Discount Code. Call the National Gang Crime Research Center to inquire about group rates (708 258-9111). The Group Discount Code provides a sliding-scale group rate discount. There is no retroactive value: if you do not apply for a Group Discount Code in advance of registration then you are not eligible for it. You must have the group discount code printed on the registration form itself.

Can we email the registrations in?
Yes, email address is: gangcrime@aol.com