



Drugs and Crime

Gang Profile

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Bloods

The Bloods, one of the largest and most violent associations of street gangs in the United States, is composed of structured and unstructured gangs that have adopted a common gang culture. Membership is estimated between 15,000 and 20,000, and most members are African American males. Bloods gangs are active in the Southwest (Los Angeles, in particular), West Central, Pacific and, to a lesser extent, the Great Lakes and Southeast regions. The Bloods' main source of income is street level distribution of powdered and crack cocaine and marijuana. Bloods members also are involved in transporting and distributing methamphetamine, heroin, and PCP, but to a much lesser extent. The gangs also are involved in many other types of criminal activity including assault, auto theft, burglary, carjacking, drive-by shooting, extortion, homicide, identification fraud, and robbery.

Background

The Bloods street gang association was formed in Los Angeles, California, in the early 1970s initially to provide members protection from the Crips street gang association. Silvester Scott established the Piru Street gang and Benson Owens established the Westside Pirus after Crips members had assaulted them. As Crips gangs continued to increase in membership and expand their turf, the Piru Street and Westside Pirus gangs aligned with the Denver Lane, Lourdes Park Hustlers, and LA Brims gangs against Crips. The members of this newly formed association called one another Blood, and their association, in turn, became known as Bloods. The Bloods gangs rapidly increased in membership and

influence by recruiting more gangs into the association. By 1978 there were 15 Bloods gangs, known as sets, operating in Los Angeles. In spite of their increasing numbers, Bloods sets were still outnumbered by Crips sets three to one. In order to assert their power despite the difference in numbers, Bloods sets became increasingly violent, especially against Crips members.

During the 1980s Bloods gangs began distributing crack cocaine in Los Angeles. Bloods membership increased dramatically as did the number of Bloods gangs and the number of states in which they were present. These increases were driven primarily by the profits generated by crack cocaine distribution. The huge profits induced many Bloods members to

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migrate to other cities and states to establish new markets. In addition, many youth in other states adopted the Bloods lifestyle, symbols, colors, and name in emulation of the Los Angeles gangs. The increase in Bloods membership made it one of the largest street gang associations in the United States. In addition, the increase in the number of Bloods sets on the East Coast was fueled by the formation of United Blood Nation (UBN), one of the most structured gangs that are part of the Bloods association.

United Blood Nation

UBN is a Bloods gang on the East Coast that was originally modeled after the Los Angeles Bloods but has adopted its own complex set of traditions. Leonard "Dead Eye" MacKenzie and Omar "O.G. Mack" Portee formed UBN in the New York City jail system on Rikers Island in 1993 to provide protection from members of Hispanic gangs, particularly Latin Kings and Ñetas. As UBN members were released from jail, they established the gang throughout New York City, eventually expanding to locations throughout New York and New Jersey as well as the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast regions.

During the 1990s Bloods membership and involvement in drug-related activity continued to increase. Bloods used intimidation tactics against rival gangs and whole communities in order to control and further expand drug distribution activities. In 1999 at least 600 Bloods sets, with over 15,000 members and associate members, were identified as being involved in transporting and distributing powdered and crack cocaine and marijuana in the United States.

Bloods remains one of the largest and most violent associations of street gangs in Los Angeles and the United States.



Alliances

Bloods affiliate with the People Nation alliance. People Nation is the rival alliance of Folk Nation and was created to protect alliance members within the state and federal prison systems. The alliance is strong within the prison system but less effective once a member is released. The People Nation alliance also includes Black Peace Stones, Cobra Stones, Insane Popes, Gaylords, Future Stones, Insane Unknown, King Cobras, Latin Counts, Latin Dragons, Latin Kings, Latin Pachucos, Latin Saints, Spanish Lords, and Vice Lord Nation.

Several Bloods sets are loosely aligned with Norteños gangs, particularly with La Nuestra Familia. Norteños is an association of Northern California Hispanic gangs led by La Nuestra Familia. Bloods sets have aligned with La Nuestra Familia in order to deter Crips sets from expanding into Northern California.

Adversaries

Bloods adversaries include gangs associated with the Folk Nation gang alliance. Folk Nation is the rival alliance of People Nation and was established in the 1980s as a means of protecting alliance members within the state and federal prison systems. As with People Nation, the Folk Nation alliance is strongest within the prison system and less effective once a member is released. The Folk Nation alliance includes Crips, Gangster Disciples, Black Disciples, Black Gangsters, Imperial Gangsters, International Posse, La Raza, Latin Disciples, Spanish Gangster Disciples, Party People, and Satan Disciples.

Organizational Structure

Bloods is an association of numerous structured and unstructured gangs, known as sets, that have adopted a common gang culture. A Bloods set can number three to several hundred members. There is no known national leader or national charter. Bloods sets in the Los Angeles area usually consist of a leader, called a shot caller, assisted by several trusted lieutenants, soldiers, and associates. Most soldiers, also known as gangsters, are generally between the ages

of 16 and 22. The soldiers are extremely dangerous because of their willingness to use violence to obtain the respect of fellow gang members.

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Some Bloods sets outside Los Angeles have a leadership core consisting of one or two individuals from an original Los Angeles-based set and include numerous local members and associates.

Membership

There are more than 600 Bloods sets in the United States with approximately 15,000 to 20,000 members and associates—6,000 of whom are in Los Angeles. Law enforcement officials in 40 states have reported the presence of Bloods sets in their jurisdictions. Most Bloods members are African American males ranging in age from 10 to 40.

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All gang members go through an initiation process. Initiation into the gang is achieved in one of the following ways: committing an armed robbery, performing a drive-by shooting, or being beaten by members in a ceremony called a beat in, kangaroo walk, or bull pen. The initiation is intended to test the prospective member's courage and loyalty.

Bloods members are easily identified by the symbols and clothing they wear. They often display a five-point star as a symbol of the gang's association with People Nation. Other symbols used by the gang include words such as Piru (a street in Los Angeles) or Damu (Swahili for blood), letters such as CK (crip killer), and numbers such as 135 or 92 (streets with Bloods sets named after them). Bloods members also distinguish themselves by wearing clothing that is red—the gang's color—although some wear colors that reflect the names of their sets. For example, members of Lime Hood Pirus wear green. Bloods members often wear the apparel of professional sports teams such as the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team, the San Francisco Forty-Niners football team, and the Chicago Bulls basketball team. They also wear clothing that emphasizes the left side of the body as a means of showing their relationship with People Nation. For example, they wear colored shoelaces (red or another color associated with their set) only on the left shoe, tilt their hats to the left, and fold their left pant legs.

Drug Trafficking

The Bloods' main source of income is from the distribution of powdered and crack cocaine and marijuana. To a lesser extent, Bloods members also are involved in transporting and distributing heroin, methamphetamine, and PCP.

Southwest Region

West Central Region

Pacific Region**Great Lakes Region****Southeast Region****Other Criminal Activity**

In order to conceal their drug distribution activities, some of the large Bloods gangs launder drug proceeds by investing in real estate and various cash-based businesses including concert promotion companies, music stores, and barbershops. Some members also use drug proceeds to fund recording companies and music groups. Bloods members engage in many other types of criminal activity including assault, auto theft, burglary, carjacking, drive-by shooting, extortion, homicide, identification fraud, and robbery.

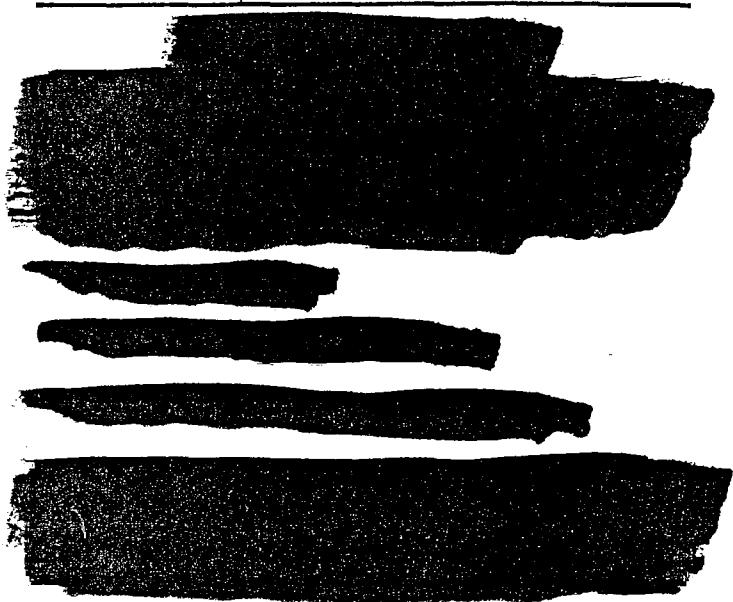
Violence

Bloods sets are among the most violent street gangs in the United States. They have been responsible for numerous homicides in most major cities, particularly Los Angeles. Bloods members regularly commit acts of intimidation, extortion, assault, and homicide in order to

further or protect their criminal activities. For example, in North Las Vegas members of the Rolling 60 Bloods have allegedly committed numerous homicides to control and expand their drug distribution activities. Most violence is targeted at rival gangs or dealers who refuse to pay extortion fees.

Outlook

Bloods sets are a serious threat throughout the United States. The release of numerous gang members from California prisons since 2000 has resulted in increased violence between Bloods sets and rival gangs. In addition, recently released Bloods members are leaving Southern California to pursue drug distribution opportunities in other regions of the country. California's "Three Strikes Law" also has induced some gang members to migrate to other regions of the country. For these reasons, Bloods sets will continue to be increasingly involved in the transportation and distribution of drugs in the Great Lakes and Southeast regions. Bloods will remain one of the largest and most violent street gang associations in the United States.



Sources

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Executive Office of the President
Office of National Drug Control Policy
High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas
Gulf Coast
Houston
Nevada
New York/New Jersey
Westchester Intelligence Center
North Texas
Ohio
Rocky Mountain
South Florida
South Texas

U.S. Department of Justice
Bureau of Prisons
Intelligence Section
Criminal Division
Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Organizational Intelligence Unit
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Assistance
Regional Information Sharing Systems Program
U.S. Attorney Offices
Middle District of Alabama
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Western District of Arkansas
Western District of Louisiana
Northern District of Minnesota
Southern District of Mississippi
Western District of Missouri
Northern District of Ohio
Southern District of Ohio
Western District of Oklahoma
Eastern District of Texas
Southern District of Texas

U.S. Department of the Treasury
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Office of Law Enforcement



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