



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

BULLETIN

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(U) How Male Gangs Leverage Female Supporters

(U) SCOPE

(U//LES) This bulletin provides information regarding the role females, who are not members, play within California gangs. Because females often avoid detection by law enforcement, to mitigate detection, male gangs leverage females to further their criminal activity.

(U) KEY JUDGMENTS

(U//FOUO) The STAC assesses with high confidence that gangs will continue to use females to conduct criminal and non-criminal activity on their behalf because females tend to be overlooked during police encounters with male gang members.

(U//FOUO) In some gang cultures, females are viewed as inferior to their male counterparts or as property; in other gang cultures, females may hold positions of esteem or act on behalf of a “shotcaller.”^a

(U) SUPPORTS ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

(U//LES) Females usually start their association to earn respect but often find themselves being used for sex, drug or weapon couriers, and as the admiring audience of the male gang members.¹ Female supporters serve additional purposes within gangs, including intelligence gathering. Sometimes they have legitimate sources of income but they may also commit crimes to provide additional financial support for the gang. Gangs commonly employ women to conduct the following:

- courier weapons, contraband or drugs;
- facilitate communication among gang members in jail, in prison, or on the streets;
- smuggle messages, narcotics, or money into jail or prison during visits;

(U) CONFIDENCE LEVEL

(U) High Confidence

generally indicates that judgments are based on high-quality information from multiple sources or from a single highly reliable source, and/or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment.



Fig 1: (U//LES) Northern Structure (a male gang) tattooed on the forearms of a female. Courtesy of Sonoma PD

^a A “shotcaller” is someone who has a high status and has the authority to give commands, order hits, or give direction for the gang.

- launder money;
- sell counterfeit goods;
- commit identity and credit card theft;
- petty or grand theft;
- prostitute themselves.²

As a communications facilitator, females may use their address or a Post Office Box as a central mailing destination where mail then gets repackaged and rerouted to other male gang members. They may also redraft letters on behalf of one gang member and send it to another.

(U) A FEMALE’S ROLE IN DIFFERENT GANG CULTURES

(U//LES) Predominantly Hispanic gangs often give their females, wives, or girlfriends much more latitude than other gangs. Women are typically given the power to run things on behalf of their “man.” They might be used in lieu of the actual shotcaller. The wife of a Mexican Mafia (EME) shotcaller is often referred to as “La Senora” – Mrs. or “La Madrina” – Godmother. A sister or biological daughter might also hold this title.⁴ While they are not involved in the commission of criminal acts, they can order gang members to commit the deed. An order given by “La Senora,” is considered equivalent to an order coming directly from the EME shotcaller; a soldier (gang member) cannot disobey her.⁵ The wife/girlfriend will often act as a liaison between street members and an incarcerated EME shotcaller to keep him apprised of what is happening on the streets. She also usually controls the gang’s money (taxes^b paid by gang members) and bank account(s).⁶



Fig 2: (U) Norteno Gang Members with a girlfriend.



Fig 3: (U//LES) Property of OMG member, Courtesy of Alabama Fusion Center

(U//LES) Among skinhead gangs and outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs), women do not typically hold as much prestige as their counterparts associated with Hispanic gangs. OMG women are typically considered to be, referred to as and treated as property. A girlfriend may be shared among members; however, as a wife, she is no longer shared but earns the privilege of patching her riding gear with “Property of” her husband.^{7,8} Another term used by OMGs and skinhead gangs to refer to their girlfriends or wives is “old lady,” indicative of their perceived inferiority.⁹ OMGs also use their women to carry weapons or drugs.¹⁰



Fig 4: (U//LES) Girlfriend of white gang member, Courtesy of CDCR

(U//LES) In some instances, female skinhead supporters are more dedicated or “down for the cause” than male skinheads, but they are still considered to be disposable. In one case, an Aryan Brotherhood gang member used a gun, which he borrowed from a female supporter, in the commission of a robbery. When the female confronted the gang member about his illegal use of her gun, he killed her.¹¹

^b Taxes are a form of extortion charged by superior gang members to fund various gang criminal activities.

(U//LES) Females associated with black gangs will frequently participate in criminal behavior on behalf of, or to benefit, the gang. In addition to the typical drug smuggling and weapon carrying, black females may also prostitute themselves for their man and his gang. For example, a former Maryland correctional employee, who admitted to prostituting herself to inmates, entered a plea to charges of participating in a prison-based drug conspiracy.¹² She was one of four Maryland correctional employees indicted; however, her role was key in facilitating the gang's illegal drug activities.¹³ She was a conduit of communication, money transfers, and sometimes other forms of compensation, such as sexual favors. Gang members see females as assets, but only until they are no longer needed. The gang members often have the attitude that if the female refuses to do something, then he will find another willing participant.¹⁴ This mentality – maintaining control over a female – is similar to the sexual exploitation seen more often among black gangs as compared to other gangs.¹⁵



Fig 5: (U) Red bandana on her dress is an indication of gang connection.

(U//LES) Asian gangs typically use women to carry weapons, transport drugs, and participate in some criminal activity; but the male gang members may not treat the women with respect. Unlike some of the other gangs, Asian gangs' treatment of females can have an ethnic basis. Chinese gangs, such as Wah Ching, tend to treat females as girlfriends, particularly if they are already US citizens, versus immigrants – legal or illegal – brought to the United States.¹⁷ Females who are smuggled or trafficked into the United States are not treated as girlfriends and are often prostituted for financial gain for the trafficker or his gang.¹⁸ Many females/girlfriends participate in crimes to benefit the gang; they may act as getaway drivers or decoys for breaking and entering attempts.^{19,20} The females do not tend to gain notoriety or increased status within the gang by participating in the commission of a crime but benefit from the spoils of the crime. Unlike other ethnic gangs, Asian females might smuggle narcotics into prison/jail, but it is usually for individual consumption, not mass distribution.²¹ They might also attend a gang meeting but are not allowed to discuss official gang business.²²



Fig 6: (U) Female Supporters of 707 Asian Crips Gang

(U) ADVANTAGES OF FEMALE SUPPORTERS

(U//LES) In a male gang, there are advantages to have girlfriends, wives, sisters, mothers, daughters, and female supporters. Aside from using the females for the commission of crimes, it is advantageous for gangs to employ females as they often have clean records¹⁷ or have legitimate means to cover bail expenses should their 'man' be arrested.²³ Females tend to be overlooked during police encounters with male gang members. Women have been known to hide contraband and narcotics in various body crevices and cavities, making it more difficult for male officers to discover these items during a patdown.²⁴ Due to such occurrences, females are entrusted with concealing evidence, narcotics, contraband and/or weapons; thus, if a female is present when an officer encounters a male gang member, it is important to be conscientious of her attire or possible hiding places. Male gang members are known to habitually seek refuge at a female's (mother, sister, girlfriend, or wife) home in hopes of avoiding detection or discovery by law enforcement.²⁵

(U) INDICATIONS OF FEMALE ASSOCIATION

(U//LES) There are key indicators showing a female's involvement with a gang. When an officer comes across a male subject and is confident the subject is a validated gang member, or known gang associate,

the officer should keep in mind that any females with the subject could be involved with the gang in some fashion. Females often deny any gang association; however, historical evidence suggests that if a female is observed talking to – or in proximity to – a known gang member and carrying drugs or a weapons, she is likely connected to or being utilized by the gang.²⁶ If a woman is repeatedly visiting multiple prisons or jails to interact with known gang members she may possibly be aiding the gang by attempting to bring contraband into the facility or acting as a communication facilitator.²⁷

(U) ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE

(U) For comments or questions related to the content or dissemination of this document, please contact the STAC at (916) 874-1100 or STAC@calema.ca.gov

(U) TRACKED BY: HSEC -5.1-ST-2010, HSEC-5.8-ST-2010

(U) FEEDBACK: The STAC encourages your feedback using the survey found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XJ7HD9Z>

¹ (U) “How Gangs Evolve.” Gangstopper.com. 03 October 2011.

² (U//LES) Email communication with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Intelligence Officer. 10 May 2011.

³ (U) “Norteno Gangs.” Opica – Norteno Gang Pictures. 03 October 2011.

⁴ (U//LES) Email communication with Los Angeles County Probation Officer. 06 May 2011.

⁵ (U//LES) Email communication with Los Angeles County Probation Officer. 06 May 2011.

⁶ (U//LES) Email communication with Riverside County Sheriff’s Department Detective. 18 May 2011.

⁷ (U//LES) Email communication with California Department of Justice Criminal Intelligence Specialist. 06 May 2011.

⁸ (U//LES) Email communication with Alabama Fusion Center Analyst. 06 May 2011.

⁹ (U//LES) Communication with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Special Agent. 16 May 2011.

¹⁰ (U//LES) Email communication with California Department of Justice Criminal Intelligence Specialist. 06 May 2011.

¹¹ (U//LES) Email communication with El Dorado Deputy District Attorney. 20 May 2011.

¹² (U) “Guerilla Warfare.” Citypaper. 22 April 2009.

¹³ (U) “24 Black Guerilla Family Gang Associates Including Four MD Dept. of Corrections Employees Indicted.” United States Drug Enforcement Administration. 16 April 2009.

¹⁴ (U//LES) Email communication with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Special Agent. 16 May 2011.

¹⁵ (U//LES) Email communication with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Assistant Institutional Gang Investigator. 19 May 2011.

¹⁶ (U) “DISGRACE!!! Look How This Member Of The BLOODS GANG And His GIRLFRIEND Dressed Up For THE PROM!!!” MediaTakeOut.com. 03 October 2011.

¹⁷ (U//LES) Communication with Orange County District Attorney Investigator. 27 May 2011.

¹⁸ (U//LES) Communication with Orange County District Attorney Investigator. 27 May 2011.

¹⁹ (U//LES) Email communication with Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department Deputy. 26 May 2011.

²⁰ (U//LES) Communication with Orange County District Attorney Investigator. 27 May 2011.

²¹ (U//LES) Communication with Orange County District Attorney Investigator. 27 May 2011.

²² (U//LES) Communication with Orange County District Attorney Investigator. 27 May 2011.

²³ (U//LES) Communication with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Special Agent. 16 May 2011.

²⁴ (U//LES) Communication with Concord Police Department Officer. 24 May 2011.

²⁵ (U//LES) Communication with Concord Police Department Officer. 24 May 2011.

²⁶ (U//LES) Communication with Concord Police Department Officer. 24 May 2011.

²⁷ (U//LES) Email communication with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Assistant Institutional Gang Investigator. 19 May 2011.