



Drugs and Crime

Gang Profile

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U. S. D E P A R T M E N T O F J U S T I C E

Black Peace Stone Nation

Black Peace Stone Nation, one of the largest and most violent associations of street gangs in the United States, consists of seven highly structured street gangs with a single leader and a common culture. It has an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 members, most of whom are African American males from the Chicago metropolitan area. The gang's main source of income is the street-level distribution of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and, to a lesser extent, methamphetamine. Members also are involved in many other types of criminal activity including assault, auto theft, burglary, carjacking, drive-by shooting, extortion, homicide, and robbery.

Background

Black Peace Stone Nation (BPSN), also known as Black P. Stones, originated as Blackstone Rangers, a street gang formed along Blackstone Street on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois, in the late 1950s. Jeff Fort and Eugene Hairston, who had met at the Illinois State Training School for Boys in St. Charles, Illinois, founded Blackstone Rangers as a political organization and later used it to profit from criminal activity. Under the leadership of Fort, Hairston, and Mickey Cogwell, a friend of Fort's, Blackstone Rangers soon evolved into an association of 21 smaller street gangs and

political organizations. The original leader of each gang and organization became a member of the association's council, called Main 21. By 1965 Blackstone Rangers had several thousand members. Under the guidance of a Presbyterian minister in Chicago, Fort applied for a charter from the state of Illinois to establish a political organization. He set up The Grassroots Independent Voters of Illinois to run political candidates in local elections. After receiving the charter from the state, the association's leadership applied for and received a \$1.4 million grant from the federal government for

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job training. The grant money, however, was spent not on job training but on housing, cars, and parties for the gang's leaders. In April 1968 federal law enforcement officials began investigating Fort for misuse of federal funds. In that same year, a dispute between Fort and Hairston resulted in the breakup of the Blackstone Rangers gang. Most of the Blackstone Rangers members, including Cogwell, aligned with Fort, who established a new gang association and named it Black Peace Stone Nation. The gang's membership soon increased to more than 5,000, spreading to California, Mississippi, and Wisconsin.

During the early 1970s the member gangs increased their involvement in criminal activities such as assault, burglary, drug distribution, and robbery, particularly in Chicago, resulting in a number of prosecutions. In February 1972 Jeff Fort and several high-ranking members were convicted for embezzling the \$1.4 million in federal job training funds and for contempt because of their refusal to testify before Congress. They were sentenced to 4 years in prison. However, Fort continued to lead BPSN from a prison cell at the U.S. Penitentiary (USP) in Leavenworth, Kansas. With Fort's incarceration, several council members attempted to take control. In response, Fort ordered the murder of several founding members, including Mickey Cogwell. Many of Cogwell's followers subsequently left BPSN and established a splinter group known as Mickey Cobras. In March 1976 Fort was released from USP Leavenworth and moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he joined the Moorish Temple of America. In April 1976 Fort held a meeting at which he changed the association's name to El Rukn (Arabic for the foundation or wellspring of knowledge) and replaced the Main 21 with "generals" loyal to him. In addition, Fort stated that El Rukn was a Moorish religious organization. He used the religious affiliation to increase El Rukn membership to approximately 30,000 members and associate members and to shield the gang's drug trafficking operations from law enforcement scrutiny. With the proceeds generated by cocaine, marijuana, and heroin distribution operations, Fort established the

El-Pyramid Maintenance and Management Corporation and used it as a front company to support the continued expansion of drug trafficking operations.

By the early 1980s El Rukn's involvement in drug distribution had increased, and some members had become involved in domestic terrorism. In 1983 Fort and several other members were convicted on federal charges of conspiring to transport multikilogram quantities of cocaine from Chicago to Mississippi for distribution. Fort was sentenced to 13 years in prison, but remained the leader of El Rukn. While in prison, Fort ordered high-ranking members to attend a meeting with representatives of the government of Libya. As a result of this meeting, El Rukn leaders agreed to conduct terrorist attacks in the United States for \$2.5 million. In the summer of 1986, several El Rukn members traveled to Libya to receive military training. Upon returning to the United States, the members attempted to purchase a light antitank weapon from undercover agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Agents tracked the weapon to El Rukn's headquarters in Chicago where numerous high-ranking members were arrested and charged with plotting terrorist acts against the United States. In December 1987 the imprisoned Fort and six members of the El Rukn leadership were convicted, and Fort was sentenced to 80 years in federal prison. With El Rukn leaders in prison and some members leaving for rival gangs such as Gangster Disciples, Fort dissolved El Rukn and reorganized the association in 1988, reverting to the name Black Peace Stone Nation.

In the 1990s Fort shifted the BPSN's focus to drug trafficking and political activities. The profits from cocaine, heroin, and marijuana distribution helped to fund the establishment of a new political action committee called Citizens Responding to Emergency Situations Today, or C.R.E.S.T. In a March 1995 letter, Fort instructed gang leaders to establish C.R.E.S.T as a voter education and registration program. In addition, Fort instructed BPSN leaders to recruit new members from various college campuses. In 1996 and 1997 the release of BPSN/El Rukn members from federal and state prisons led to a resurgence of BPSN. Fort retained

control of the gang association from prison through his son, currently a high-ranking member of BPSN.



BPSN is made up of seven gangs including Gangster Stones, Jet Black Stones, Rubinites, Future Stones, Puerto Rican Stones, Corner Stones, and Black Peace Stones—the largest gang in the Black Peace Stone Nation.

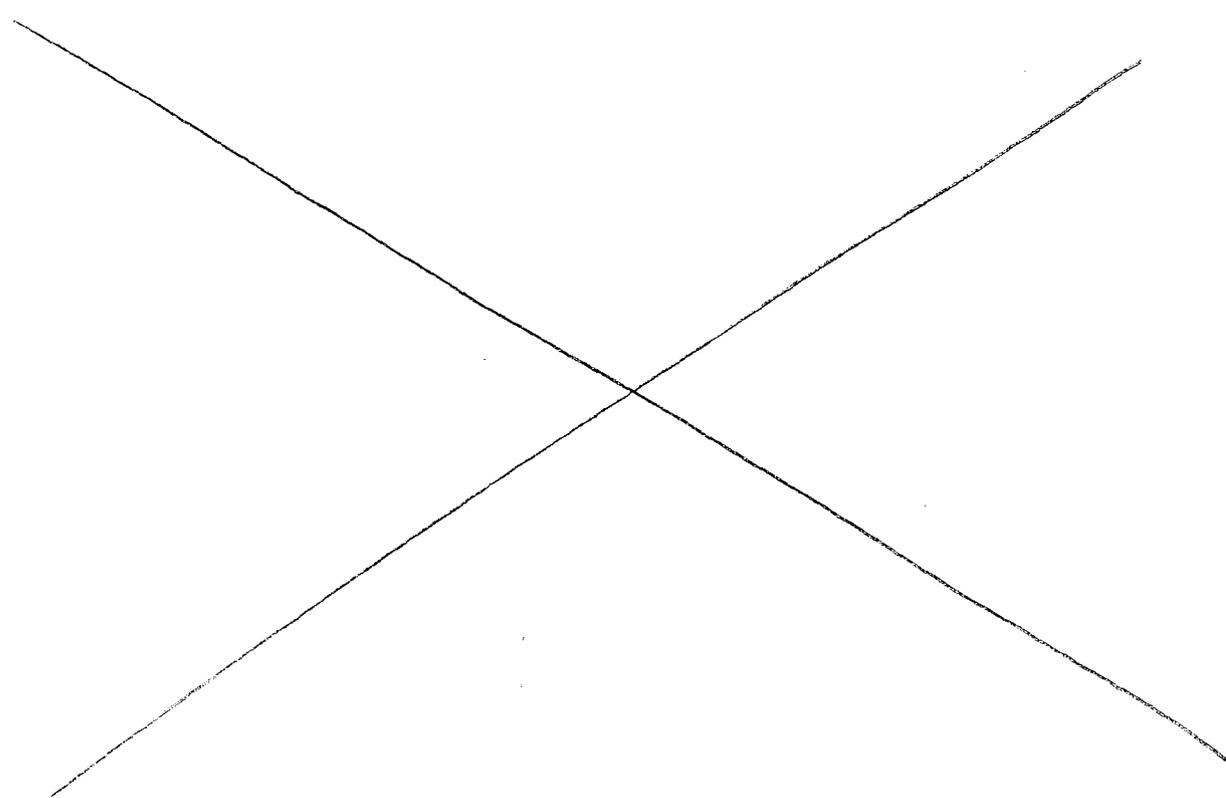
Alliances

BPSN is aligned with the People Nation gang alliance. The alliance was established in the 1980s in the Illinois Department of Corrections as a means of

protecting incarcerated gang members. The alliance is strong within the prison system but less effective after members are released. The People Nation alliance includes Bishops, Cullerton Deuces, Cobra Stones, Gaylords, Insane Deuces, Insane Popes, Insane Unknown, Kents, King Cobras, Latin Brothers, Latin Counts, Latin Dragons, Latin Kings, Latin Pachucos, Latin Saints, Spanish Lords, Vice Lord Nation, and Warlords. Several BPSN and People Nation gangs also maintain a close relationship with various Bloods gangs.

Adversaries

BPSN's primary adversaries are 18th Street, Mara Salvatrucha, Mickey Cobras, and Gangster Disciples. Other rivals include gangs belonging to the Folk Nation gang alliance system. Folk Nation was formed in response to People Nation as a means of protecting alliance members within the Illinois Department of Corrections. The alliance is strong within the prison system but less effective

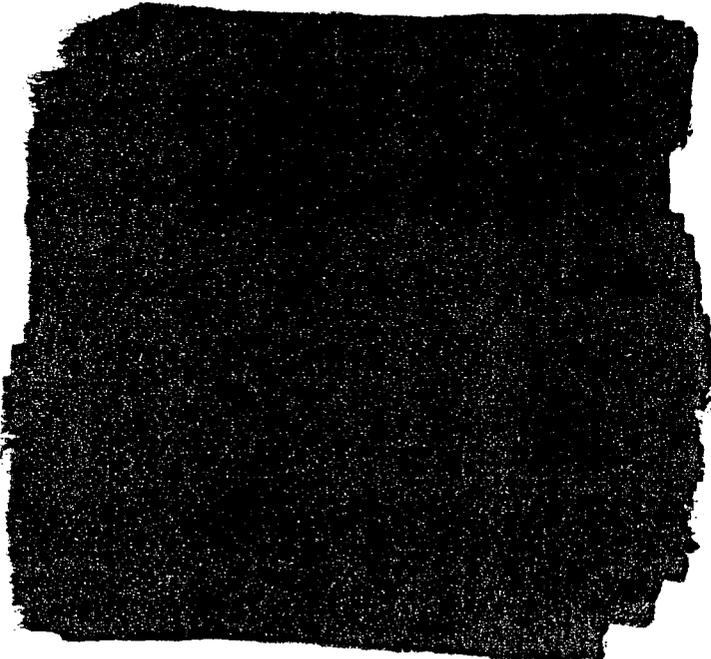


once a member is back on the street. The Folk Nation alliance includes Black Disciples, Black Gangsters, Crips, Imperial Gangsters, International Posse, La Raza, Latin Disciples, Spanish Gangster Disciples, Party People, and Satan Disciples.

Organizational Structure

Members of BPSN also distinguish themselves by wearing clothing in the gang's colors of black, red, and green. Members often wear the apparel of professional sports teams such as the Chicago Bulls and Phoenix Suns basketball teams. They also wear clothing to the left side of the body to show their affiliation with People Nation. For example, they tilt their hats to the left, fold their left pant legs, or wear black, red, or green shoelaces only on the left shoe.

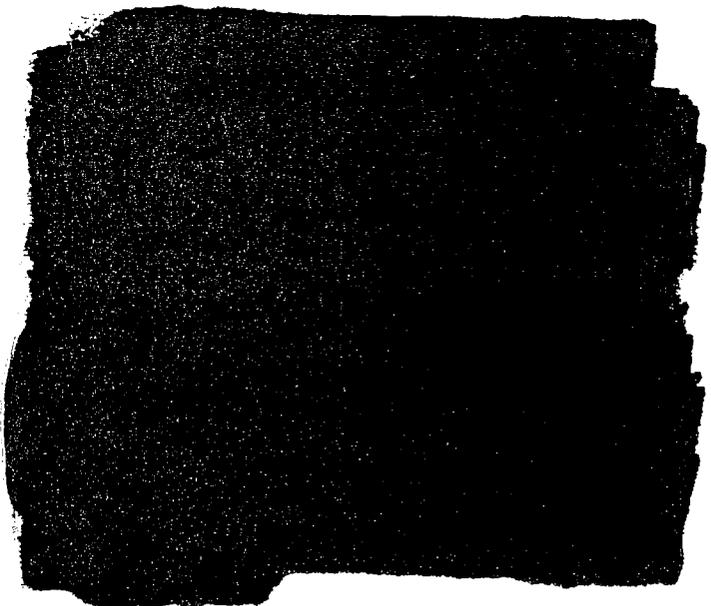
Drug Trafficking



Membership

Black Peace Stone Nation has 6,000 to 8,000 members and associate members among seven gangs in 20 states. In Chicago, there are 3,000 to 5,000 members. Most members are African American men in their early twenties, although members range in age from 10 to 40 years old. All members go through an initiation process involving one of three activities: committing an armed robbery, performing a drive-by shooting, or by being beaten by members in a ceremony called a beat-in. The initiation is intended to test the prospective member's courage and loyalty.

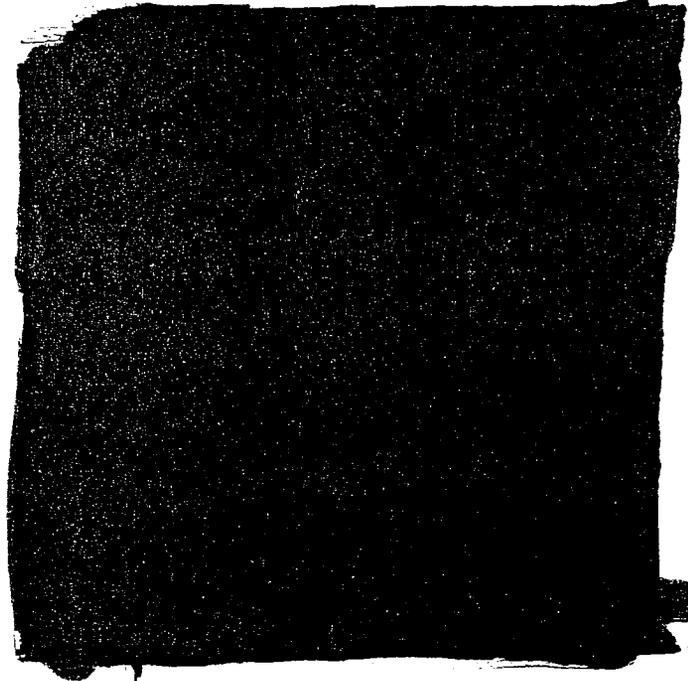
Members are easily identified by the tattoos and clothing they wear. The tattoos often include an encircled pyramid with a sun on top and an eye (the eye of Allah) on the left side of the pyramid. Other tattoos and symbols include a crescent moon and a five-pointed star, words such as Allah (Arabic for God), and numbers such as 7, which stands for the seven acts/prayers of the Holy Quern (Koran).



Great Lakes Region



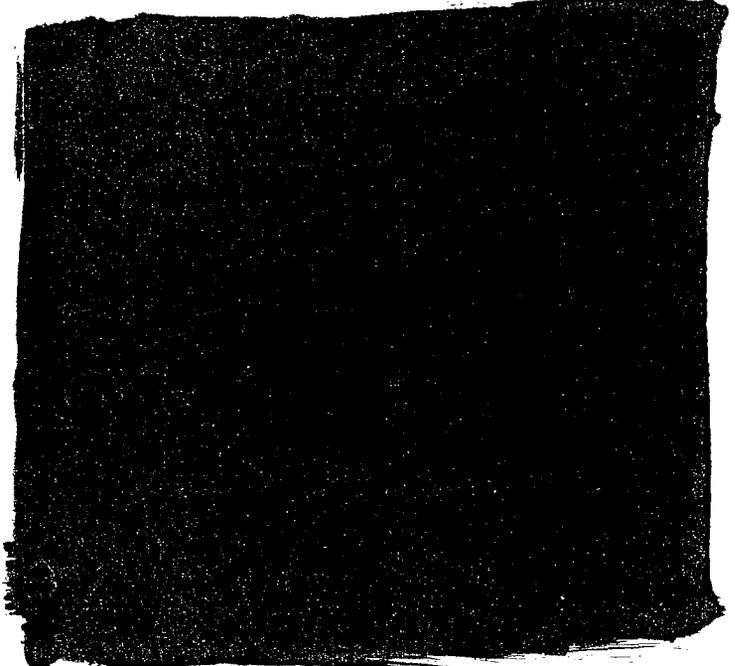
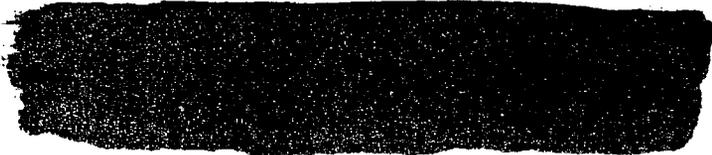
West Central Region



Southeast Region



Southwest Region



Other Criminal Activity

In addition to drug trafficking, BPSN is engaged in many other types of criminal activity. Members commit assault, burglary, drive-by shootings, extortion, homicide, identity theft, money laundering, and robbery. BPSN members launder illicit drug proceeds through cash-based businesses and concert promotion companies. Some prominent members launder their drug proceeds by investing in real estate.

Violence

BPSN is one of the most violent associations of street gangs in the United States. Its members have been responsible for numerous homicides in many major cities, particularly Chicago. From January 1995 through August 1998, BPSN members in Chicago were involved in 150 homicides and 299 aggravated battery incidents. Members regularly assault, extort, intimidate, and commit homicides in order to further or protect their criminal activities. The release of numerous gang members from Illinois prisons and federal prisons since 1997 has resulted in increased violence between BPSN sets and rival gangs.

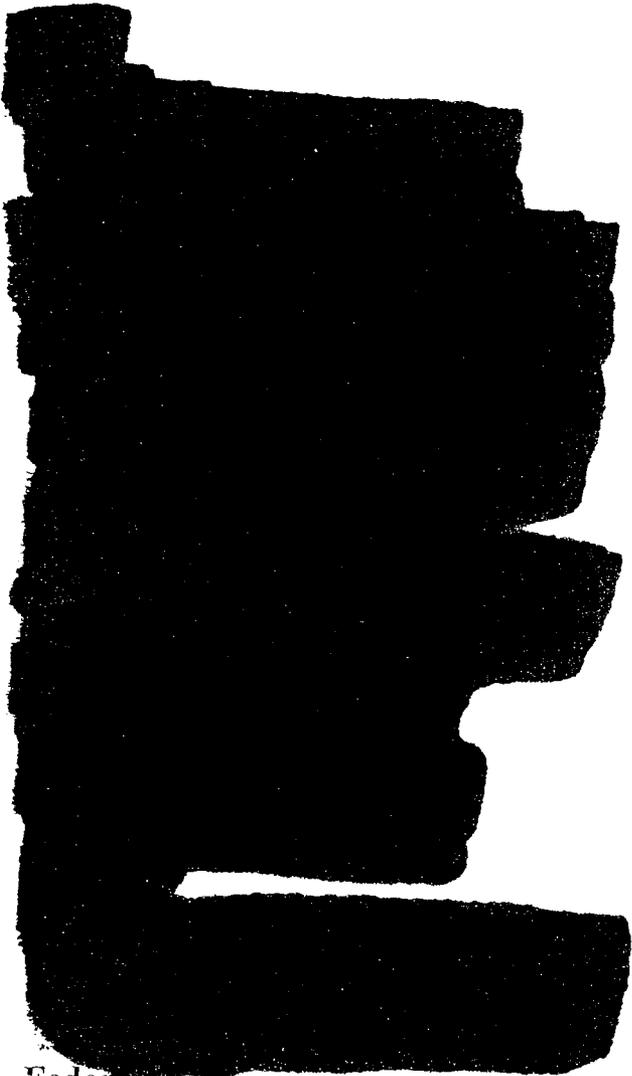
Outlook

BPSN will continue to pose a serious threat to many regions of the country. Members who are being released from prison will continue to leave Chicago to pursue greater drug distribution opportunities in other regions of the country. As a result, BPSN sets will be increasingly involved in the transportation and distribution of drugs in the West Central and Southeast regions.



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