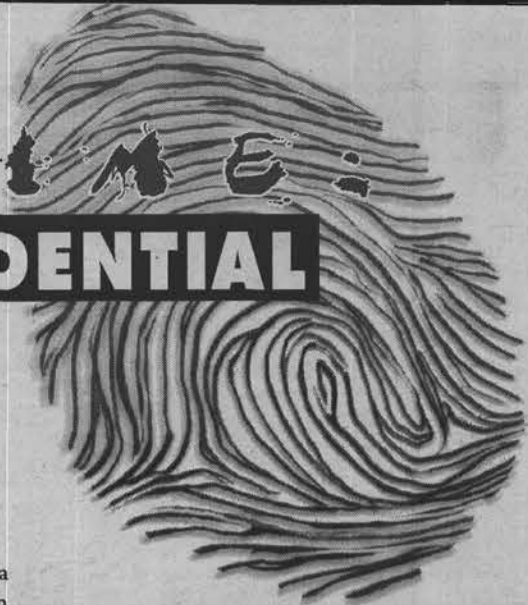


TRUE CRIME

L.I. CONFIDENTIAL



THE GANG'S ALL HERE

NASSAU'S GANG EXPERT ON THE GROWTH OF L.I.'S CREWS

by Bill Jensen

Fifteen gang members are standing on a table at the Tabernacle of Joy church in Uniondale. Tattoos, bandanas and baggy pants ... they are menacing. Corey Alleyne, detective with the Nassau Special Investigations squad and county's premier gang expert, picks one of them up and holds him in his hand.

"I don't like this," he says, shaking his head.

The gangsters, all 1-inch tall, plastic and available for two quarters at local grocery store vending machines, are part of a growing problem. There are only a handful in the room, but they all came from one machine. There are hundreds of machines with hundreds of gangsters all over the Island.

The little figures, called Homies, are an old story — many communities have been up in arms over the quarter-machine figures that they say glamorize gang life (manufacturer Gonzalez Graphics says they represent the West Coast Latino community). But keeping gangster action figures out of kids' hands is just the latest grenade in the battle Alleyne is waging. A battle that could slowly turn into an all-out war on Long Island.

"From my involvement, I'm seeing gang activity far worse than it's ever been," says the 31-year veteran, who has spent the last eight years working the gang beat. "I'm seeing drive-bys. I'm seeing assaults of innocent people. People want to think gangs are only in black and Latino communities, but I can show you an affluent community, less than one percent black, where we have a set of Crips. And they're all white. I can show you a guy — blonde hair, blue eyes, lives in a two million dollar house, [has a] mom and dad and he's a Blood." In gangs, the color of your skin doesn't matter. "As long as they're crazy enough to be down," says Alleyne, "there's no problem."

Every Kid's at Risk

Communities all across the Island are experiencing a rise in gang activity. Alleyne doesn't like to talk in specifics. Mentioning a certain gang that has power over a certain town only enhances their image, an image that is all too attractive to the disaffected elementary school student in the shopping mall who sees five guys decked out in matching red walking like royalty past Foot Locker and The Gap.



Alleyne says that a large majority of the kids he speaks to in Nassau schools want nothing to do with gangs. But there are plenty of potential recruits. "Every kid is at risk of gang membership," says Alleyne. A kid who may get 1300 on his S.A.T.s but can't get any girls, will be attracted to the popularity. A kid who is bad at school but good at art will be recruited for his tagging abilities.

"What they're really looking for is respect," says Alleyne. "How do you get that

respect? 'You're gonna respect me 'cause I'm 13 years old, my crew is eight kids deep and we carry box cutters.'"

Evolution of a Crew

How does a gang, known primarily on this coast through gangsta rap videos and movies, sprout up on Long Island?

"A guy moves from the West Coast," Alleyne explains. "He's a nothing on the West Coast. But he's got a burn mark [for instance, in the design of a dog paw], a tattoo and a bandana. As soon as he says 'I run with the Crips,' he's the Michael Jordan of gangs here."

The guy, who was always on the outside back west, sets up his own initiations with his own rules. A beat-in

(the pummeling with fists of a prospective gang member) that would normally take 31 seconds might be shaved down to 11 seconds, just because the guy doesn't know any better. Dues are collected (most gangs hold to a five-dollars-a-week charge), weekly meetings are held, outsiders are intimidated and, often, drug dealing starts.

If the gang is in a town that has a large population of illegal immigrants, they will shake down day laborers, contractors — anyone who is not willing to go to the police for help.

The posses or turf groups that have no national affiliation come to being because of the nationally known gangs.

The Inevitable

According to Alleyne, there are easily thousands of gang members in Nassau, about six to eight nationally known gangs and several hundred provincial posses. Still, Alleyne says, many affluent communities won't admit there is a problem — even if he shows them proof — until a major event occurs.

Three years ago, there was a threat that a national gang was going to come and take over Nassau County on Halloween night.

"The attention we had during that time was unbelievable," says Alleyne. The "takeover" never occurred, the tension calmed down and the public forgot all about its gang problem.

While the centers of LI, the shopping malls, have all seen at least one gang incident, according to Alleyne, many communities and parents who send their kids into those malls to hang out deny the problem exists. It will likely take a big incident — i.e., a gang shooting of a white kid from an affluent neighborhood — in order to get parents to listen.

Alleyne wants more parental involvement and more funding for programs that give kids a substitute for "just saying no" to a gang. But most importantly, he wants people to stop denying there is a problem. ■

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THE LONELY-HEARTS CLUB

Tipping the scales at 202 pounds, with a manipulating demeanor and no money to her name, Martha Beck was no prize. But to Raymond Fernandez, a 47-year-old Hawaiian native, she was something special — and a perfect partner in crime.

The scheme went like this: Ray, a slick talker with a strong chin, would become pen pals with lonely-hearts club members. With Martha posing as Ray's sister, the two would move in on lonely women and bilk their bank accounts. Then they would kill them.

After following this M.O. in Chicago, the duo came to New York, where they met up with Janet Fay in Valley Stream.

Martha plunged a hammer into Janet's skull, and Raymond strangled her and buried the body in Queens.

The two were arrested in Michigan when neighbors told police about the disappearance of widow and mother Delphine Downing. The two also killed the woman's two year-old daughter.

The trial was a freak show, both were convicted, and the handsome Latin lover and his hefty dame professed love to the end.

On March 8, 1951, the state flipped the switch. Martha was made up all nicey-nice — all except for the back of her head, which was shaved for a clean connection with the chair's electrodes.

"Prisons and the death house have only strengthened my love for Raymond," Martha said in her final statement. "In the history of the world, how many crimes have been attributed to love?"

"What the hell does the public know about love?" questioned Ray.

Raymond went first, getting four jolts of current. Martha went last. She only needed two.



Martha Beck

COLD CASE

Rape

Friday night, October 13, 1995
Lido Beach

The 24-year-old woman was walking home from a sports bar. It was near Main Street and Conklin Avenue in Farmingdale where she spotted him. He was around 28, with dark hair with a mustache and a slight bump on his nose. Most importantly, he had a car. He picked her up in a blue Nissan and offered to give her a ride to Long Beach. He drove across the bridge and headed to Lido, where he stopped the car in an unknown location, grabbed her by the shoulders and pushed her down into the seat. He held one hand over her mouth, and with the other, pulled down her pants and raped her. She ran from the car to a friend's house and called the police. She was treated and released from South Nassau Communities hospital in Oceanside. He got away with it.



If the police sketch above looks like someone you knew in 1995,

contact LIconfidential@islandear.com or

Crime Stoppers at 1-800-244-TIPS