

CITY OF MILWAUKIE

ORDINANCE NO. 1722

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MILWAUKIE, OREGON, DECLARING GRAFFITI A NUISANCE AND PROVIDING FOR ITS ABATEMENT IN CHAPTER 8.04 OF THE MILWAUKIE MUNICIPAL CODE.**

**WHEREAS,** defacing the property of others by means of painting, drawing, writing, etching, or carving, with paint, spray paint, ink, knife or other similar method, commonly referred to as "graffiti" is an act of vandalism and is against the law; and

**WHEREAS,** persons frequently deface property of others by painting, drawing, writing, etching, or carving graffiti on places such as bridges, buildings, signs, benches, telephone booths, doorways, walkways, and alleyways; and

**WHEREAS,** graffiti includes markings which are often the first indication of gang activity and interest in a geographical area, and prompt removal or eradication of such graffiti is crucial to law enforcement efforts to control the spread of gang activity and violence because it has the effect of minimizing the placement of additional graffiti by delivering the message to vandals that a community will not tolerate graffiti; and

**WHEREAS,** graffiti constitutes a public nuisance which causes depreciation of the value of the defaced property and the surrounding property and contributes to the deterioration of the neighborhood and the city in general and may promote gang related activities; and

**WHEREAS,** depreciation of property values and deterioration of neighborhoods leads to economic blight, an increase in criminal activity, and is injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the residents of the City; now, therefore;

**THE CITY OF MILWAUKIE DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1.** Chapter 8.04 of the Milwaukie Municipal Code is amended by adding Section 8.04.155 to read as follows:

**"8.04.155 Graffiti**

A. It is every property owners' duty to remove graffiti promptly from their property in a manner acceptable to the City. When graffiti is located upon private property, the City shall cause written notice to be posted on the property and served upon the owner of the property and person in charge of the property requiring removal of the graffiti. The notice shall include a statement of what action(s) are necessary to bring the property into compliance with this section. Unless additional time is granted by the City Manager, due to a hardship in complying, the property owner or

person in charge of the property shall have ten days after the date of the posting and service of the notice to remove the graffiti.

B. "Graffiti" means any unauthorized painting, writing, drawing, carving or inscription which can be seen from any public right-of-way, sidewalk, alley or park and which damages, defaces or destroys any real or personal property through the use of paint, spray paint, indelible marker, ink, knives or any similar method regardless of the content of the message delivered or nature of the material used in the commission of the act."

Section 2. Section 8.04.190 of the Milwaukie Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

**"8.04.190 Abatement - By City.**

A. If within the time allowed, the nuisance has not been abated by the owner or person in charge of the property, the City Manager may cause the nuisance to be abated.

B. No abatement shall occur under this section unless preceded by issuance of a judicial warrant authorizing entry, search, seizure and abatement, or in the alternative, written consent and release of liability by the property owner or person in charge of the property.

C. The City Recorder shall keep an accurate record of the actual cost incurred by the City in abating the nuisance, including any administrative expenses."

Read for the first time on June 2, 1992 and moved to a second reading by 5-0 vote of the City Council.

Read for the second time and adopted by the City Council on June 2, 1992.

Signed by the Mayor on June 2, 1992.

Craig J. Lomnicki  
Craig Lomnicki, Mayor

Attest:

Pat Duval  
City Recorder

Approved as to form:

Michael C. Robinson  
City Attorney

# IX

## GRAFFITI

### WRITING ON THE WALL

From Police Product News Magazine.

**Graffiti.** It's a vandalistic eyesore that can intensify gang conflicts. But it can also provide valuable clues to help officers combat gang violence.

Hunters tracking an animal that has attacked a camper or unsuspecting visitor in the wilderness can follow the tracks and droppings that have been left behind. Similarly, police can use graffiti to show gang activities.

Gang members use graffiti to establish an identity, issue a challenge, bolster their egos, memorialize deceased gang members, proclaim their violence and mark the boundaries of their territory. To this end they will use cans of spray paint, broad-tipped ink markers, chalk and other types of writing implements to deface walls, fences, public restrooms, school hallways, subway cars, buildings and vehicles. Gang graffiti has even been observed burned into grass.

While some forms of graffiti are brilliant in color and technique, others are barely legible haphazard markings. Young gang members are taught the style of their particular "set" or group within a particular gang, and will add their names to the rolls of those who came before them, some of whom may already be dead as a direct result of gang violence.

However, graffiti was not invented by gang members. Archaeologists have found drawings and inscriptions scratched on walls in ancient Rome and Pompeii. In the 1500's, Spaniards left their markings on rocks in the Southwest. According to the Academic American Encyclopedia, the word "graffiti" comes from the Italian word *graffio*, meaning "a scratch," again referring to handwriting or images in public view. You can still visit churches in England from the medieval period where proud historians have preserved such intricate patterns. However, today we no longer take pride in marks left on public and private property because, unfortunately, when you find gang graffiti, trouble such as drugs and related crime violence is usually not far behind.

Gangs use graffiti to aggressively communicate with each other. The amount and visual appearance of graffiti create an image for a gang and are also used as a means to intimidate other gangs and members of the

community. A gang's control of an area can be determined by the amount of graffiti which has been left unchallenged. It is also an indication that a gang's intimidation tactics are working when graffiti has not been painted over by a business or property owner. When graffiti has been crossed out, it often means that another gang has issued a challenge. "R.I.P." painted next to or over the crossed out names of gang members means that a death threat has been issued or a rivalry exists, or that the gang member is already dead.

An analogy can be drawn that the use of graffiti is similar to the actions of a dog claiming its territory by relieving itself on anything surrounding its locale. When dogs smell another animal's scent they will leave their mark on top of whatever the other animal has left behind. Similarly, when graffiti is left untouched, gang members are given a sense of security about their controlled territory.

In the book Understanding Street Gangs (Custom Publishing Company, 1985), authors Robert K. Jackson and Wesley D. McBride point out that gangs from various ethnic groups have different styles of writing. Hispanic gangs tend to use stylized, script-type letters, while black gangs usually favor a simpler block-type lettering resembling the older graffiti found in Philadelphia, PS known as the "Philly Style" of graffiti. Hispanic gang members refer to graffiti as "throwing a placa (sign or plaque) on a wall." Hispanic graffiti "memorials" to dead gang members can be extremely colorful and created with painstaking care. In order to intimidate other gangs, black gang graffiti often lists the names of prisons or correctional institutions where individual gang members have done their time. Gang graffiti also frequently contains profanity or expressions of individual power.

The Crips often use blue paint, which is also the color used for articles of clothing such as hats, jackets or bandannas worn to let others know with what gang they are associated. Specific words also serve as clues to gang activity. For example, in Crip markings one may find the work "Cuzz", their greeting or means of referring to another gang member, or the initials "B/K" meaning "Blood Killers".

The Bloods, said to have been formed in Los Angeles to protect themselves against the Crips, use red paint rather than blue in their graffiti, and often use the word

"Piru". This word refers to a gang that originated in Compton, CA, called the "Compton Pirus". One may also find "C/K", which means "Crip Killers", next to an individual member's name.

Gang members have shown themselves to be deadly serious concerning the sanctity of their markings. Rival gang members have been killed upon being discovered painting over graffiti placed by another gang.

Although graffiti may appear to be nothing more than an act of juvenile vandalism, profuse graffiti is a sign of a declining neighborhood which should be taken seriously by law enforcement officers and community members. "Symbols of incivility", a term coined by A. Hunter in 1978, reference the presence of graffiti as a physical sign of deterioration and one of the factors leading to a breakdown of normal community life. Other signs of decline include vacant or abandoned housing, autos in disrepair, littered alleys and scattered bulk trash. Fortunately, there are ways in which law enforcement officers, community officials, business owners and the public can fight back against graffiti and those who deface public and private property.

Albert Engelken, deputy executive director of the American Public Transportation Association, a trade group representing 95% of the public transportation system in North America, has stated that "Graffiti breeds graffiti." He reports that graffiti is widely assumed to reduce the number of passengers using public transportation systems.

In San Diego, CA, the San Diego Trolley system has a policy of immediately removing any graffiti found on its trolley cars. For example, if even a single scrawl is found on a seat, a maintenance worker will meet the car at the nearest stop, usually within the hour. If the markings cannot be removed, the seat is replaced or the car is pulled out of service.

Beverly Silverberg, public affairs director for the Washington metropolitan Area Transit Authority, has included the topic of graffiti in her talks at trade conferences. She says that graffiti gives passengers the impression that the problem is out of control, that no one is in charge and that they are not safe.

In Washington D.C., subway officials are now sending representatives into schools in an effort to persuade youths not to put graffiti on their trains and buses. Those who are caught are fined and must attend lectures about the crime. New York City recently undertook a campaign to buy new cars and clean up those defaced by graffiti. It is reported that two-thirds of the New York City Transit Authority's 6,200 car fleet

is now graffiti-free, and officials intend to keep it that way. The upgrades are considered a significant reason that the daily ridership increased from 3.2 million in 1983 to 3.7 million in 1987.

Prisons and correctional institutions are also plagued with gang graffiti. Manuel Jimenez, associate superintendent of the Department of Corrections, Institution for Men, in Chino, CA, states that graffiti is all too common within a correctional facility and that officials combat the problem by removing it before it can become a focal point and lead to inmate violence. Many businesses have attacked the graffiti problem by sandblasting graffiti from concrete or by using a special graffiti-removal formula which is on the market for use on equipment and concrete.

Police departments in Los Angeles and Orange counties in California are fighting back to regain control over parks which were previously designated for family recreation but are now controlled by intimidating gangs. For example, Leuders Park in Compton, CA, was previously covered with graffiti. To regain control of the park, a police substation was set up nearby, and a police officer and armed security guard were assigned to the park. The graffiti was removed and has not reappeared, nor have the gangs attempted to return. Once again, children can play and adults can relax without the fear of being attacked.

Another tactic proved successful in Westminster, CA, at the Sigler Park Community Center. At one point, the community center had to be closed due to gang-related activities. Later a truce was negotiated with the help of a consultant working for a gang intervention program. Gang members painted over graffiti, including their own, in an effort to give the park back to the community.

The Los Angeles Police Department attacks graffiti with a paint spraying "weapon" known as the Mobile Anti-Graffiti Unit, or MAGU. Captain Art Lopez, of the Hollenbeck Division, is coordinating the graffiti removal program, which was installed when residents complained that not enough was being done to combat the graffiti problem. The equipment and paint was donated by area merchants, and the unit is operated by local youths and reserve officers.

**While graffiti may seem like just another unsightly product of crime, being able to "read" and make sense of it is a valuable asset to a police officer. By knowing what to expect and who may be responsible for the crimes committed in your precinct or reporting district, you are accepting the challenge issued to the community, rival gangs and your agency.**

Do not lose sight of the intelligence value in monitoring graffiti in your area. Brazen enough to give you their names, nicknames and principle location, gangs are "giving notice" that they are present in your city and challenging you to stop them. You can become aware of the gang activity of a particular area by observing puto marks, names marked for death or injury by being crossed out, or who has already been killed and remembered in memorial graffiti by "grieving" gang members looking for retaliation. Crime scene photographs should include any graffiti in the area because a possible suspect may have left behind his or her "signature".

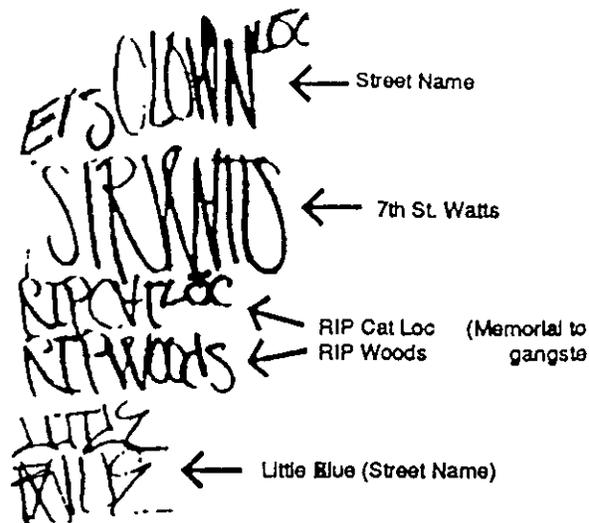
Check for tattoos when you are interviewing a suspect or conducting a field interrogation on a suspected gang member. Many times these tattoos, which could be considered "body graffiti", will resemble the gang graffiti that you see in your area, identifying the individual's membership or position within the gang itself.

As a police officer, you should be proactive rather than reactive to gang graffiti. Use your initiative, training and experience to plan ahead regarding what you and the department can do to prevent and deter graffiti writers. Your presence and the cooperation of citizens who are willing to report crimes will allow the community to regain a sense of safety and control.

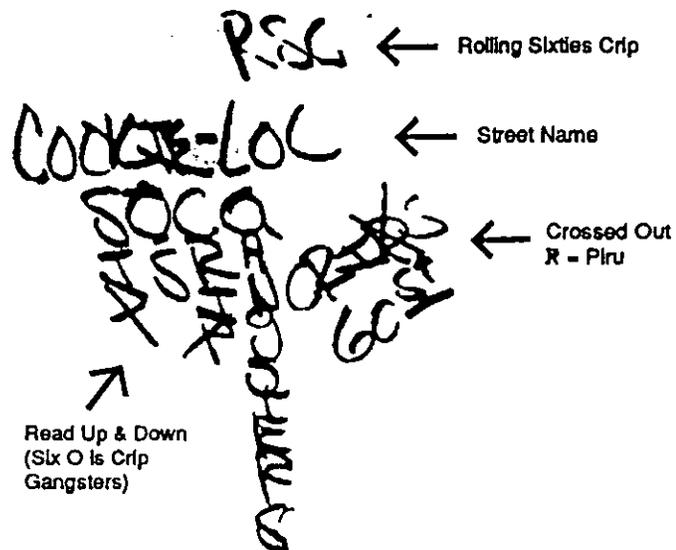
*John J. (Jack) Janson, Jr., is a former FBI Special Agent, instructor at August Vollmer University, in Santa Ana, CA, and a candidate (ABD) for his doctorate in criminology. Jack E. Whitehouse, Ph.D, is a former Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriff and is currently Dean of Academic Affairs at August Vollmer University. Both work as consultants in criminology and it should be noted that they both wrote the above article on graffiti.*

**DEADLY ERROR #7....  
RELAXING TOO SOON**

*The "rut" of false alarms that are accidentally set off. Walking in and asking if the place is being held up. Observe the activity. Never take any call as routine, or just another false alarm. It's your life on the line.*



WSCG (West Side Crip Gangsters)



HISPANIC PLACAS

Many of the standard symbols are as follows:

-R. RIFAMO, RIFA, RIFAN

Meaning: We're the best, I'm the best, they're the best.

EZ, ZA, LAS, ZOS, <sup>MR</sup> (El, La, Las, Los, MR)

Meaning: He or she, plural. Signifying gender of the gang.

CONTROZZA (Controlla)

Meaning: The gang controls the area.

TOTAZ (Total)

Meaning: "United"

E/S - CON SAFOS- (C/S)

Meaning: "Con Safos" - Same to you or "There's nothing you can do about it".

The main body of the placa is the name of the individual or of the gang. Rarely will you see only an individual gang member's moniker without the gang placa represented as well. This is due to the fact that many of the monikers are used by all gangs. What the writer is attempting to do is to get you to picture him relaying a message or challenge to you.

He does this because there is generally only one of any moniker in each gang. If there are more than one, it is usually a brother combination. Example: Cruz - older gang member; Lil' Cruz - younger brother, emulating his older brother.

Some of the more common monikers are:

Angel	Chato	Diablo	Indio	Malo
Blackie	Chango	Dino	Junior	Mondo
Bobo	Chico	Flaco	Joker	Mosca
Babos	China	Frog	Lencho	Negro
Bino	Cowboy	Guero	Loco	Neto
Chuey	Chivo	Huero	Lil' Man	Topo
Oso	Raunchy	Turkey	Papa	Snake
Tudy	Payaso	Sapo	Viejo	Pato
Spider	Wino	Pee Wee	Seco	Porky

An example of a full placa is:

-E2

He or She (El or La)

WINO

Moniker (Wino)

DE

From (De)

ZOS CHICOS

The gang name (Los Chicos)

-R-

I'm the best

C/S

There is nothing you can do about it (C/S)

205 NEIGHBORHOOD

Gang (Los Neighborhood)

TOTAZ

United (Total)

CONTROZZA

Controls (Controlla)

-R

We're the best

These placas are challenges when placed on another gang's wall or territory. What evolves then is a rub-out (the crossing out of another placa). Eventually a gang war could take place. These are direct challenges that are directed towards the gang's machismo and ability to defend their territory.

GUIDE TO READING GANG GRAFFITI

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HISPANIC

- 1. Step One  
Barrio or Varrío  
Meaning Neighborhood  
or Group/Clique
- 2. Step Two  
The 'HG' Meaning  
Hawaiian Gardens City  
and Gang/Clique
- 3. Step Three  
The Letter 'R' Meant to  
Be "RIFA," Meaning Rule,  
Reign, or Control
- 4. Step Four  
The actual gang group  
abbreviation of 'PQS'  
"PEQUENOS," from Hawaiian  
Gardens. (Normally younger  
group, i.e., Chicos, Midgets,  
or Tiny's.)
- 5. Step Five  
The Number '13'\* stands  
for "SUR" meaning  
Southern California
- 6. Step Six  
The letter 'L' or 'L's'  
is used to mean the Vato  
Locos or the Crazy Ones/  
Brave Ones. Not normally  
a separate gang or clique.

\* The number 13 is sometimes used by younger gang members to mean Marijuana.

GUIDE TO READING GANG GRAFFITI

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HISPANIC

1. STEP ONE  
VARRIO OR BARRIO  
MEANING NEIGHBORHOOD  
OR GROUP/GANG
- V S L  
S S R  
S U  
- 14 -
- THE LETTER 'S' IS FOR STOCKTON.  
THE LETTERS 'SS' IS FOR SOUTHSIDE. 'NS' WOULD BE NORTHSIDE, ETC. THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA SOMETIMES MAY BE PLACED AFTER THE ACTUAL GANG/CLIQUE ABBREVIATION.
2. STEP TWO  
TRIPLE 'S' MEANING  
SOUTH SIDE STOCKTON  
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA AND  
IDENTIFICATION OF THIS  
GROUP/CLIQUE.
- V S L  
S S R  
S U  
- 14 -
3. STEP THREE  
THE ACTUAL GANG/GROUP  
ABBREVIATION OF; LU -  
LITTLE UNITY, FROM SOUTH  
SIDE STOCKTON. A CLIQUE  
WITHIN A CLIQUE.
4. STEP FOUR  
THE LETTER 'R' MEANT TO  
BE "RIFA"; MEANING RULE,  
REIN, CONTROL, WE'RE NO. 1
- V S L  
S S R  
S U  
- 14 -
5. STEP FIVE  
THE NUMBER '14'  
STANDS FOR THE  
FOURTEENTH LETTER OF  
THE ALPHABET 'N'  
MEANING "NORTE" OR  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
- V S L  
S S R  
S U  
- 14 -
6. STEP SIX  
THE LETTER 'L' OR "L's" IS  
USED TO MEAN THE VATO LOCO  
OR THE CRAZY ONES/BRAVE  
ONES. NOT NORMALLY A  
SEPARATE GANG OR CLIQUE.

GUIDE TO READING GANG GRAFFITI

BLACK GANG GRAFFITI

1. STEP ONE

THE LETTERS "OG"  
DENOTES THE  
INDIVIDUAL IS AN  
ORIGINAL GANGSTER;  
IMPLYING BEING A  
FOUNDING MEMBER

OG/SNIPER  
8/3  
HC  
SUR  
P/K

2. STEP TWO

"SNIPER" IS THE MONIKER  
IS THE INDIVIDUAL THAT  
SCRAWLED THE/HIS GANG  
GRAFFITI.

3. STEP THREE

THE NUMBERS "8/3" MEAN  
8-TRAY; FOR 83RD STREET  
USUALLY A SPECIFIC SET/  
GANG OR BLOCK/CLIQUE OF  
A GANG. IT MAY ALSO BE  
WRITTEN 8-3.

OG/SNIPER  
8/3  
HC  
SUR  
P/K

4. STEP FOUR

THE LETTERS "HC", MEANS  
HOOVER CRIP. A SPECIFIC  
CRIP GANG.

5. STEP FIVE

THE "SUR" IS SPANISH  
FOR THE CARDINAL  
DIRECTION OF SOUTH.  
IN GRAFFITI IT MEANS  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. IT  
HAS BEEN EMULATED FROM  
THE HISPANIC GANGS.

OG/SNIPER  
8/3  
HC  
SUR  
P/K

6. STEP SIX

THE LETTERS "P/K" MEANS  
PIRU KILLER A RIVAL TO  
CRIPS. IT MAY ALSO BE  
"B/K" MEANING BLOOD  
KILLER OR "P/187" MEANS  
PIRU MURDERER: SEC 187  
PENAL CODE FOR MURDER.

OG/SNIPER  
8/3  
HC  
SUR  
P/K  
or  
B/K

What happening CUZZ

This is the Homie Shoo  
 Ain't nothing happening, the  
 same old thing you are not  
 missing nothing, we had it out  
 with the bays but were back  
 together. but the bo's trying  
 to get out of line. CUZZ you  
 little homie is back on the set til  
 CRAZY. INSONE IS IN THE HALL HE  
 IS GOING TO DO YOUR Y.A. SAY CUZZ  
 HOMIE CRAZY MIKE GOT SIX MONTHS  
 SCATTERS. WE GOT TWO NEW HOMIE  
 ON THE SET SEALOCK, ONE PUNCH. SAY  
 CUZZ AIN'T GOING TO MAKE THIS TO  
 LONG CUZZ. AND YOU WHAT FRANCES SET  
 YOU UP. FRANCES TOLD EYE'S YOUR FATHER  
 TOLD HER TO DO THAT.

LAUGASTER      YOUR HOMIES

ROCK      EYE'S      CHOC-LINDO

5x2<sup>ND</sup> ST      5x DUCZ

BROADWAY      CARDUZ

CEJNS      5/2

Figure 4.1 Typical letter from a gang member in prison to another gang member outside. Note gang vernacular and stylized printing.

in prison recount their gang's recent exploits, and the feats of their associates are often described in great, but exaggerated, detail. These letters are frequently written in gang vernacular, and painstakingly printed in stylized gang script. Another form of gang communication, and certainly the most observable, is the writing on walls: graffiti.

#### GRAFFITI

Inscriptions in the form of graffiti can be found in every large city in the United States. It is not a new method of communication, and in California gang graffiti can be traced back to the early 1940's. The messages seen today are a continuation of that tradition and vary from the innocent declarations of love for a sweetheart to the anti-establishment slogans of radicals and revolutionaries. However, most metropolitan graffiti is the work of street gangs. The bulk of this gang graffiti, especially in the Greater Los Angeles area, is written by Hispanic and black gang members. Their graffiti styles differ, not so much in the basic mechanics or meanings, but in sophistication and intensity. The primary reason for this difference is that black gangs lack the traditional gang philosophy common in the established Hispanic gangs.

The choice of lettering style illustrates these differences. While Hispanic gangs prefer stylized script-type letters, black gangs favor a much simpler "string" block-type lettering. It is called "Philly style," because of its similarities to graffiti found in Philadelphia. (The name does not imply any connection between the black gangs in Los Angeles and those in Philadelphia.)

#### Hispanic Gang Graffiti

Graffiti is an important part of Hispanic gang tradition. These gang members call their inscriptions *plaguesos*, or *placas*. The slang term, *plaguesos*, is derived from the Spanish, *placa*, meaning "a sign" or "plaque." When gang members talk of writing on a wall they call it "throwing a *placa* on a wall." It is not just graffiti. It proclaims to the world the status of the gang and offers a challenge to rivals.

Moreover, graffiti writing is a structured, acquired skill. It takes a great deal of time and practice to perfect the Hispanic style of wall writing. In some areas, children begin learning it at an early age and it can be found on notebooks, school papers, bus benches, tennis shoes, and even matchbook covers. Only when a writer's skill is perfected does he attempt larger structures, i.e., walls, buildings, fresh concrete, billboards and fences. No suitable surface is safe from graf-

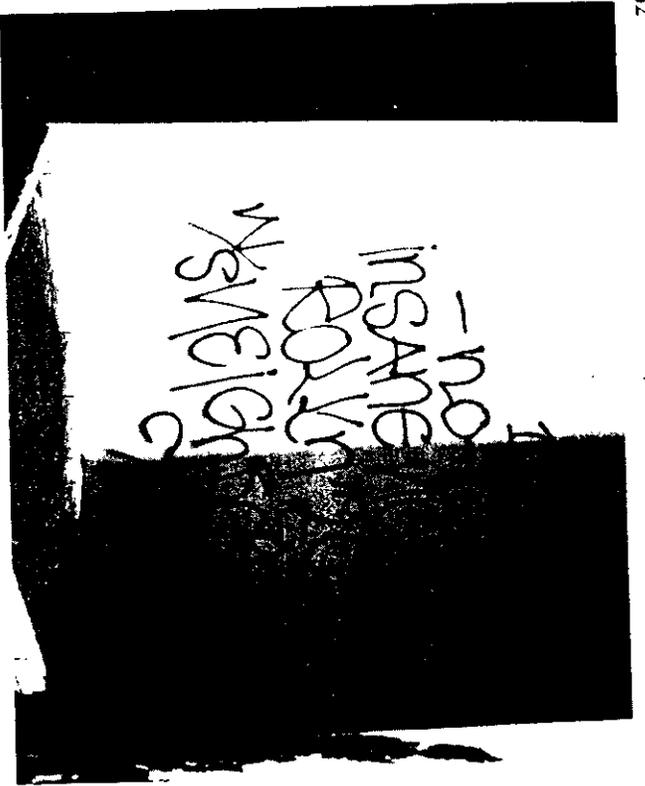


Figure 4.2 Typical Black gang graffiti. Note plain lettering.

fiti. Tall buildings and freeway overpasses offer only a moderate challenge to a determined graffiti writer. He uses knives, chalk, paint, oil, crayons, and occasionally blood to print his message. However, cans of spray-paint and marking pens are the tools most frequently used. Quality and style are important too, because such efforts will create or enhance both the gang's image and the writer's personal status within the gang.

Although some graffiti can qualify as artistic endeavors, most scrawlings lack social appeal and may defy translation by individuals not familiar with gang communication and symbolism. The primary purpose of this discussion is not so much to focus on the visual aspects of graffiti, although examples are given, but to examine their meanings and implications.

#### Elements of Hispanic Gang Writing

In studying graffiti itself, certain basic elements can be discovered. For example, the main body of the writing usually contains the gang's name or logo. A logo is a descriptive emblem used to identify the gang. It may be a group of Roman numerals, initials representing the gang name, or a picture or symbol (See Figure 4.5). Major business

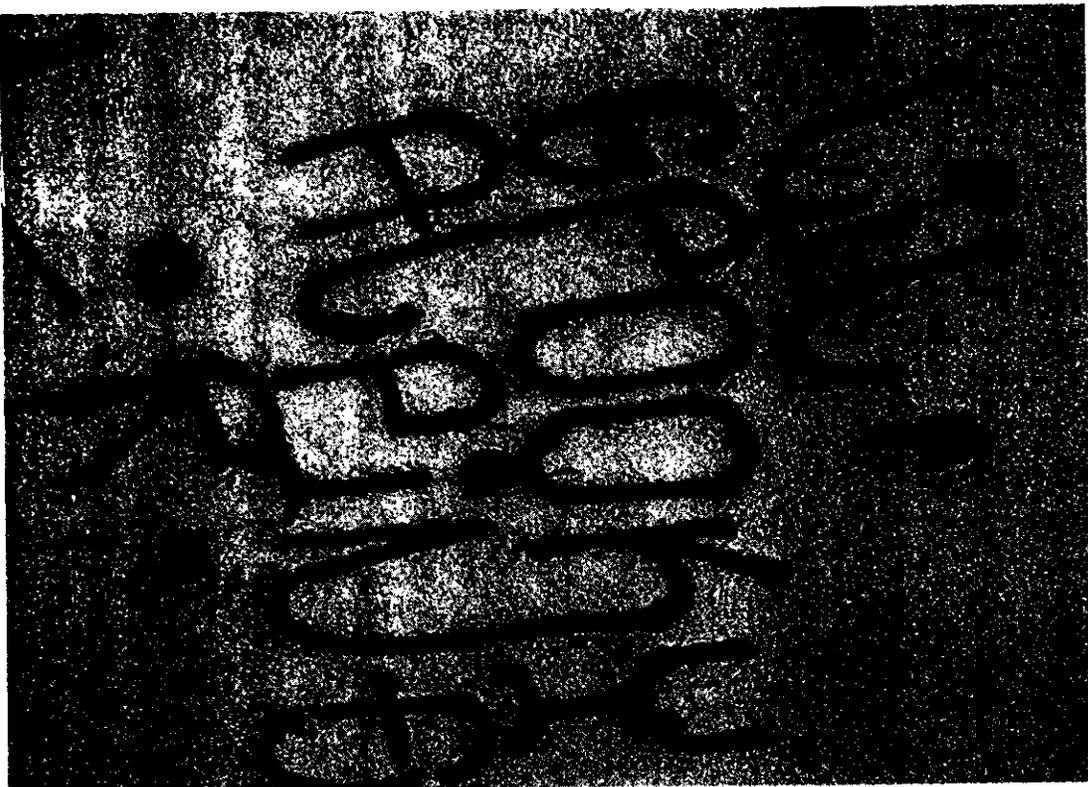


Figure 4.3 Typical Hispanic gang graffiti. Note highly stylized writing.

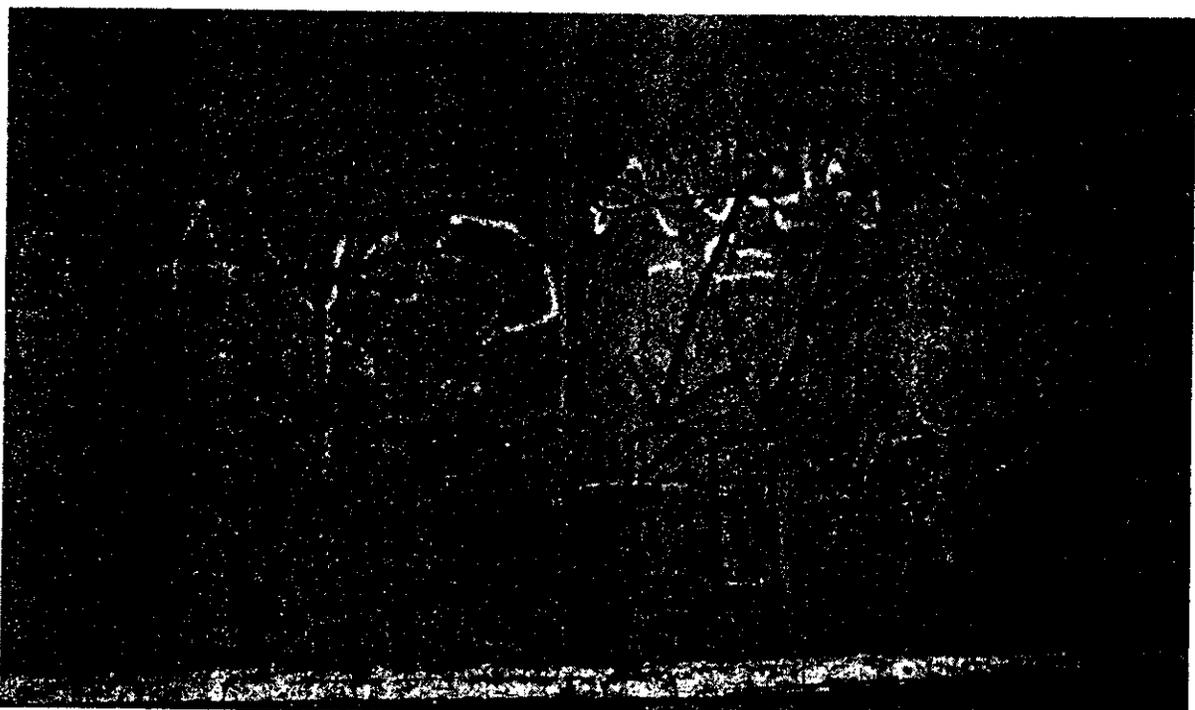


by its younger members.

When a gang maintains undisputed control over an area or location for an extended period of time, it is considered its turf. Gangs acquire territory in three ways: (1) they fight for it, (2) it was left to them, or



**Figure 4.6** Graffiti reads: "Lil Spooky, Alpine, R." Lil Spooky is the person who wrote the graffiti. Alpine is the gang's name. The "R" denotes power.



**Figure 4.7** Graffiti showing "cross-out" by rival gang member. "Rats" means rats.

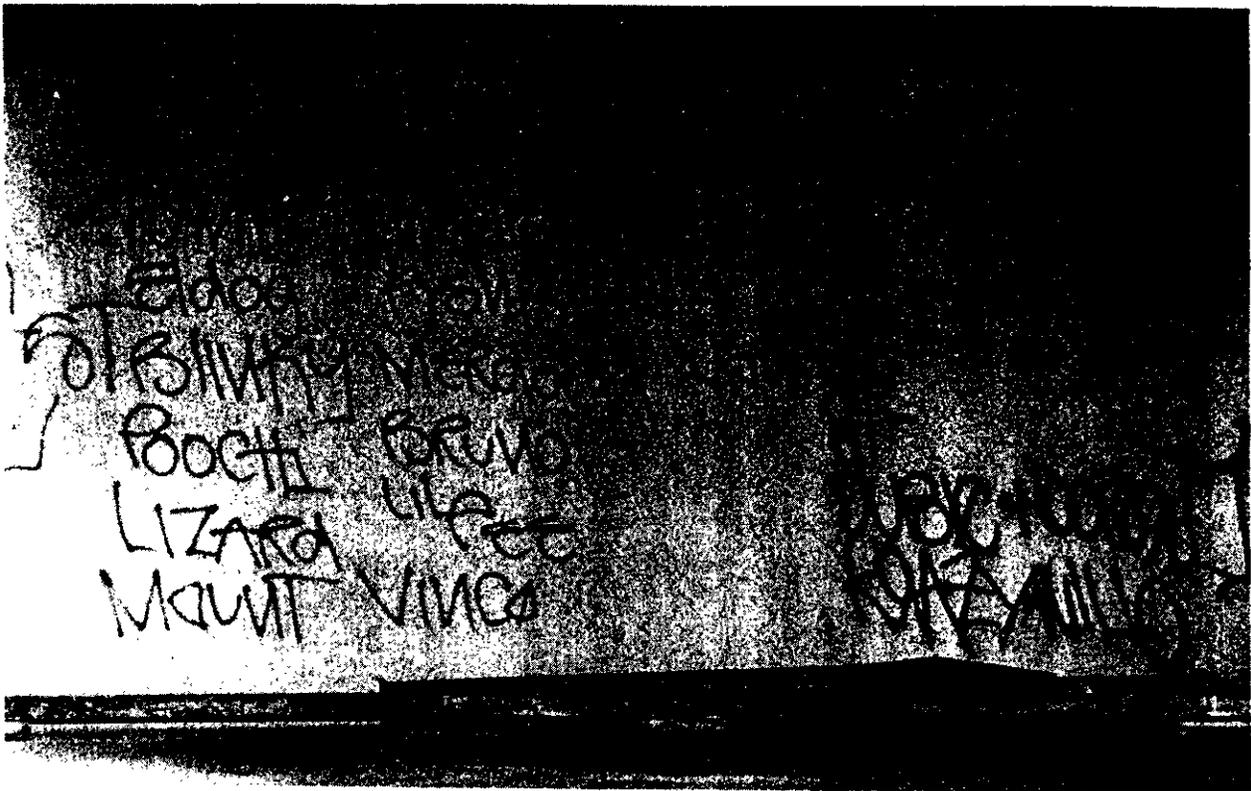


Figure 4.8 Graffiti showing list of active gang members by their street names.

(3) nobody wants it. Regardless of how a gang established its territories, in the center of its turf, safe from rivals' graffiti and cross outs, murals can be found illustrating the gang's self-image and lifestyle. Many of these are elaborate and quite artistic. In this same core area will be the *placas* of individual gang members. A simple highly skilled graffiti writer will design and paint the gang's name or logo, and a complete list of the active members by their street names. It is not uncommon to find a list of fifty or more gang names drawn in neat rows under the gang's logo. At times it will show the order of importance, with the leaders' names first or across the top.

Wall writings are also found in the core area that record the various subfactions or 'cliques' of the gang. Street gangs are composed of various factions, divided generally by age. Although not a formal organization chart, such listings do indicate how the writer views the gang's structure and who the active gang members are at the time.

#### Black Gang Graffiti

Black gangs use graffiti in much the same way as the Hispanic gangs. However, it is evident that there are vast differences between the two. Black gang graffiti lacks the flair and attention to detail that characterizes the Hispanic (See Figure 4.9).

Black gang graffiti began to appear in the early 1970's. It was very crude, but has been refined in recent years. Much of it is loaded with profanity and expressions of individual power, in contrast to the expressions of group or gang power found in Hispanic graffiti. Symbolism is obvious and crude drawings of weapons are often seen. The authors have noted that in some of the correctional institutions, Hispanic inmates will teach black gang members the finer, more delicate points of gang writing. Some of the black members, having learned this style of graffiti writing, will imitate it, but will imbue it with black gang meanings.

#### Stoner Graffiti

Another discernible type of graffiti that has recently appeared is that of the Stoners. Stoner graffiti differs from traditional gang writings in only a few ways. The names of heavy metal rock groups: Black Sabbath, Twisted Sister, AC-DC, and so on, have been noted. Drugs and the occult go hand-in-hand. Satanic-type drawings have been noted, which have meanings familiar only to those within the Stoner gangs. Common inscriptions such as "Natas Stewollof"

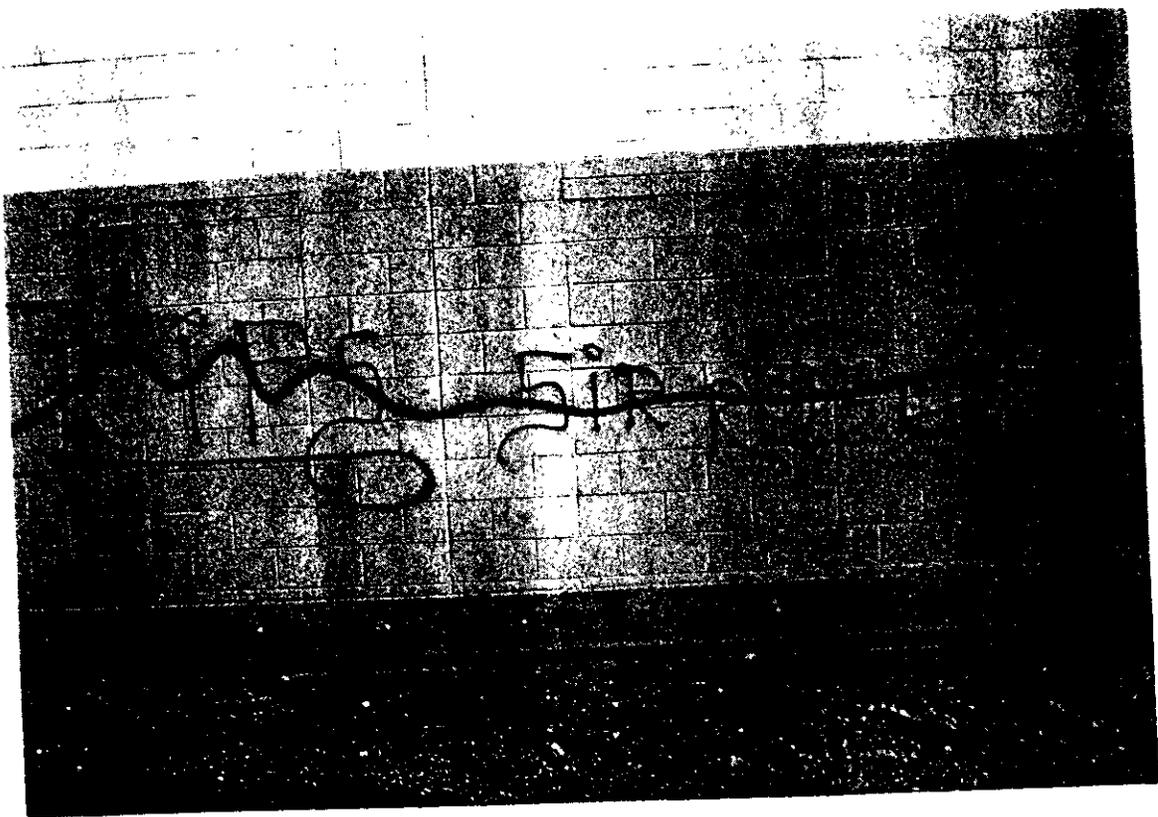


Figure 4.9 Typical Black gang graffiti. Note crude drawing of machine gun following words: "Crips - Sir Rods."

(Satan Followers, spelled backwards) are a result of the writers following disguised instructions found in some of the music. The custom of spelling words backwards began in the Satanic Church.

Stoners use symbolism in their graffiti more than any other gang. The upside-down cross with the numbers 666 at the ends, and the circle with a star in the center are frequently seen. These symbols have been publicized on record album covers, pictures of rock groups (including the groups' logos), and occult posters. The symbols are Satanic and originated in the Satanic churches. The gang names that Stoner members pick for themselves are generally demonic in nature or signify a violent, anti-social act.

#### Summary

Even though the general public regards graffiti as a form of vandalism, and perhaps an indication of a declining neighborhood, to a gang member such wall writing is not vandalism. It is an essential communication medium that advertises his group, describes its social structure, records its conflicts, and exalts its lifestyle.

#### CALO-SLANG

Gang members have set themselves apart from the rest of society by using their own systems of verbal communication, although such systems are no longer widely used. Black gangs have used a type of street language composed of slang terms that have meaning only to those that know the slang. Hispanic gangs converse in Spanish when approached by non-Hispanics, and the more hostile gangs have an argot called *calo*. An argot is a private, or secret, speech known only to members of the same group—in this case, fellow street gang members.

#### Gang Street Language

*Calo* is a Spanish that is not taught in school but learned on the streets. Though its use is not limited to any group or section of society, gang members may limit their vocabulary to the *calo*. The use of *calo* becomes important to the gang member because it is the language of the only group which holds significance for him: his gang. It is from his gang that he gains sustenance, identity, and a sense of belonging.

Because *calo* is often incomprehensible to both Spanish and English speaking persons, its use within a gang by gang members heightens their sense of separateness from society and establishes intimacy

within their own sub-culture. As the *calo* terms are learned by those outside the group, the gang will devise new ones which rapidly enter common use, thus maintaining and perpetuating the gang's mystique. For example, according to gang informants, *vato loco* means, literally, a "crazy guy"; and denotes a Hispanic who steals, shoots dope, and spends some time in prison (usually in that order). If a gang member engages in any of these activities, in *calo* terminology he has officially become *vato loco*, and once so identified, as a matter of pride, will continue to behave in that manner. Thus, the label identifies the individual and directs his behavior. The implication of labeling him extends beyond identification. In fact, labels become directives for behavior and role playing. On the other hand, as *vato loco* denotes a "crazy guy," *escuadra* is the word denoting a "square" or law-abiding individual, and there seems to be no gray area between *escuadra* and *vato loco*. A person is either one or the other, but never



Figure 4.10 Stoner graffiti depicting name of "Rush" (rock group) and pentagram surrounded by number 666 (marks of Satan).

both.

*Calo* also includes and reflects the conditions and attitudes of the gang's neighborhood. There are many references for which no *calo* terms exist (e.g., education, religion, economics, etc.). However, *calo* does have words for activities such as eating (*refinar*), drinking (*pistiar*), fighting (*chingasos*) and dancing (*borfolar*). A gang member's almost exclusive use of *calo* tends to curtail his imagination, and through prolonged use would seem to distort his view of reality and, by extension, of society. All types of work are grouped under the derogatory epithets, *cameo* (from the Spanish, "camel") and *jale* (from Spanish, "to pull"). Whether a man has worked as a laborer in a construction gang or as a chemist in a research institute, within the *calo* structure he is still *jalandando* (pulling) or *camelando* ("camelling"). Therefore, a high correlation exists between anti-social attitudes and an extensive use of *calo*. It is in *calo*, then, the language of his gang, that the member thinks and communicates.

#### CLOTHING

Even though the gang member uses graffiti and perhaps some form of *calo* to identify with his gang, it is equally important for him to reinforce his sense of belonging in a more direct, non-verbal way, by adopting a gang style of dress.

Most members are proud of their gang and openly display signs of membership in it—one indication being the way he is dressed. But there are exceptions. Non-gang youths may appear to dress like gang members by carrying canes, wearing certain colors, earrings, caps and the like. Or a gang member may be a kind of maverick who belongs to a gang but does not dress in a stereotypical fashion identifiable with it. The final determining factor regarding dress depends on whether the person wants to be identified as a gang member, or not.

Similar kinds of gangs dress in a like manner. Street gangs will dress in one style, while outlaw motorcycle gangs dress in another. Van or car club members, instead of dressing in a specific style, wear special jackets or sweat shirts to identify their members, as do a few of the street gangs. Oriental gangs generally blend into their surroundings and are undistinguishable in appearance to the outsider.

#### Types of Gang Styles

There are two basic types or categories of gang clothing. First, there is the type that will lead the observer to the conclusion that the wearer

cent residents are often subjected to gang violence by the mere presence of graffiti in their neighborhood.

## What To Do

Fighting crime and dealing directly with violent gang members is best left to experts trained to handle dangerous situations. However, everyone has the responsibility to overcome apathy and fear. Everyone must work toward a solution to the gang problem.

One solution is to offer alternatives to gang involvement. Youths, hanging out after school on corners, provide a breeding ground for gangs.

The alternatives include locations where organized and supervised programs are offered. The following suggestions may provide a starting point for concerned parents: the United Way, your child's school, Boy Scouts of America, Parks and Recreation Department, youth service programs, community sports programs, Law Enforcement Explorer Scout Posts, etc.

## Becoming Aware

The first and most important step is to become aware of gangs, gang members, and their activities. Citizens armed with this basic knowledge are better able to avoid becoming victims of gang attack.

## Neighborhood Involvement

Gangs attempt to instill fear. They intimidate rivals and citizens alike. The gang's power grows through the use of fear and intimidation. This can be countered by citizen action groups such as the Neighborhood Watch. A neighborhood that is united and dedicated in a spirit of cooperation toward stopping crime and violence will greatly hamper a gang's efforts to intimidate and victimize.

## Prevention

Prevention is the key to controlling gang activity. Many parents are unaware that their children are involved in gang activity. Many of the younger gang members are not aware of the realities of the violence associated with gang membership or the finality of death. Parents should look for changes in the behavior patterns of their children. Such changes include truancy, a decline in grades, changes of friends, late hours, graffiti in their bedrooms, and other indications of gang involvement.

Gangs frequently gather in dark areas to avoid

being seen. In these locations, they will often drink, use narcotics, and deface property with graffiti. Graffiti targets a neighborhood for deadly violence. Whenever possible such areas should be kept well lighted. Outside floodlights mounted out of reach with wire covers to prevent intentional bulb breakage discourage gang loitering. In addition, graffiti should be quickly removed. The longer it remains, the more it attracts gang members.

## Gang Facts

Violence is inherent in gang activity. Anybody in the area is fair game, including men, women, and children. Once, gang members used chains, knives, and an occasional homemade "zip gun." They now use shotguns, automatic rifles, handguns, and explosives. Once, victims of gang violence were rival gang members. Now they are often innocent bystanders killed or injured by stray bullets. Certain gang areas are frighteningly similar to a war zone. There are many who sleep on their floor for fear of getting shot.

## Get Involved & Take A Stand

When incidents occur, cooperate with authorities. If you are concerned about having your name used, please ask about our "Remain Anonymous" program which can safeguard your identity when reporting crime. Information concerning gang crimes or any gang activity should be referred to your local law enforcement agency or the Oregon State Police Youth Gang Strike Force, Portland, Oregon, (503) 248-5066.

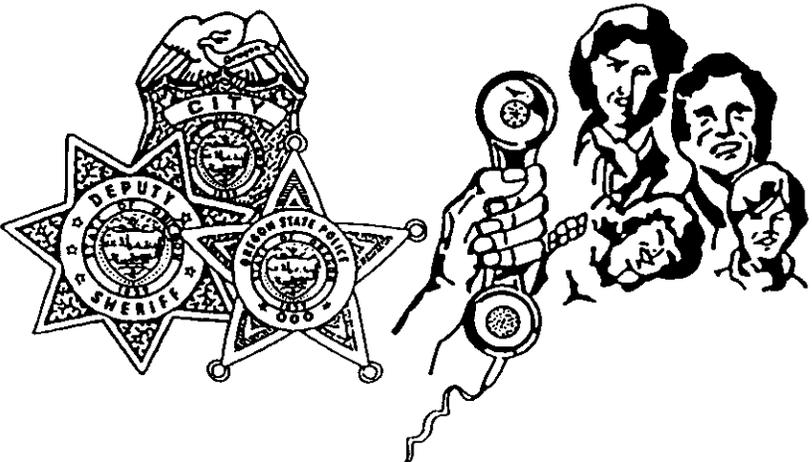
## Further Information

For additional information during regular business hours, ask to speak to a Detective from the State Youth Gang Strike Force at:

(503) 248-5066.

Published in cooperation with the

Oregon State Police,  
City, County, Federal  
Law Enforcement Agencies



# STREET GANGS

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STOP THEM

# CITY OF MILWAUKIE



MAILING ADDRESS  
P.O. BOX 22009  
MILWAUKIE, OR 97222-0009  
FAX (503) 652-4402

## MEMORANDUM

May 7, 1992

TO: Mayor and City Council  
THROUGH: Dan R. Bartlett, City Manager *DB*  
FROM: Charles A. Mansfield, Chief of Police *CM*  
SUBJECT: GANG GRAFFITI; NUISANCE ABATEMENT

### Action Requested:

Adopt ordinance declaring graffiti a nuisance; adding section on graffiti to Section 8.04 of City Code; amends abatement process to require consent or due process on property to be abated.

### Background:

As previously reported to Council in a Worksession late in 1991, the city has been experiencing a large number of criminal mischief offenses involving the application of graffiti to property, both public and private. Acts of vandalism, including the application of graffiti, are covered under ORS 164.345-164.365. "Graffiti" is defined as "any unauthorized writing or drawing in a public place".<sup>1</sup> Graffiti activity is "a physical sign of deterioration and one of the factors leading to a breakdown of normal community life".<sup>2</sup> Just as we deal with yard junk, abandoned autos, abandoned houses, etc. as a nuisance, so do we need to deal with graffiti. In addition to the common graffiti writings found in a number of public places (public transit, rest rooms, etc.), we also find another form of graffiti--gang graffiti--an activity which began in Portland and has moved to a number of suburban areas, including Milwaukie. Attached to this memorandum are copies of or excerpts from publications used to illustrate graffiti produced in connection with gang activity.

Note that graffiti is a means of communications for gangs and

<sup>1</sup> American Heritage Desk Dictionary, 1981 Edition

<sup>2</sup> "Writing on the Wall", Police Product News Magazine

Note that graffiti is a means of communications for gangs and also represents establishing of "turf", or the territory to be controlled by the gang.<sup>1</sup> It has unique characteristics; individual gang members can be identified from it; it is a means of challenging rival gangs or specific gang members; it serves as a means of recruitment or announcing future violent incidents against rivals. If left on fences, buildings, highway overpasses and other structures it sends a message to gang members and "wannabees" that the community tolerates gang activity, that the community has low standards of civic pride and organization, and further acts of vandalism are "OK".

Local examples of graffiti can be found in such places as Linwood School, the Highway 224 exit ramp to Highway 99E Northbound, the Murphy Plywood plant site, bus stop signs on 32nd Avenue between Dwyer Drive and Sherrett Street and the Post Office building on Adams Street, just to name a few.

As detailed in the draft ordinance, a number of instruments and techniques can be used to create graffiti; it has no artistic value and is used as a communications device or means of advertising gangs and the criminal acts associated with gangs. Values of a community's image and values of property itself are adversely affected by the allowed presence of graffiti. It directly affects the value of both business and personal property, sends a negative image about the community to residents and visitors alike by detracting from the visual presentation of the community. Its prompt removal is essential to the maintain a high level of quality appearance of our community and efforts to reduce gang activity and gang influences.

As was discussed with you in the earlier worksession prompt and thorough removal of graffiti is essential, to say to gangs that the responsible citizenry of the community is in control and that graffiti is not wanted, just as gang members and personal behaviors that emulate and idealize gang membership is not wanted.

The technique of prompt graffiti removal is advocated by the State Youth Gang Strike Force, National Crime Prevention Council and local police departments, including the Los Angeles and San Diego Police Departments, both of whom have strong anti-graffiti programs. Local transit districts also encounter this problem and have instituted prompt graffiti removal policies.

As part of our program to reduce the vandalism problem in general, the Police Department incorporates in its school presentations a "McGruff" video on vandalism. Part of this

<sup>1</sup> Oregon Youth Gang Strike Force, "Street Gangs--What You Can Do To Stop Them"

video specifically demonstrates youngsters spraying graffiti on buildings and "McGruff's" message deals with the impact of this crime on the community. Obviously, a number of interest groups in the community--government, schools, business and parents--working together can reduce the impact of this crime through both education and eradication.

To date the police department has developed a program of informing property owners by letter that graffiti has been placed on their property and requests them to promptly remove this writing (a copy of this letter is attached). Many property owners have been most responsive--others have been slow to act or have not corrected the problem at all. There is a strong need, therefore, to cover graffiti, both incidental and gang related types, as a nuisance under the city nuisance abatement program.

The proposed ordinance would provide the following upon discovery of graffiti on public or private property:

1. The City shall provide written notice of the nuisance to the property owner, the person in charge of the property (if different) and post a notice on the property. The notification will list steps necessary for correction. Unless a hardship extension is granted by the City Manager, the nuisance must be removed within 10 days.
2. If abatement does not take place, the city may use its resources to remove the graffiti and bill against the property for its costs. The city may access the property either by consent or by exercising due process and obtaining a judicial warrant.

As an alternative to an expensive removal process using city crews, I have received several offer of both materials (paint) and personnel (either through service organizations or persons on community service) to provide abatement on a reduced cost or no cost basis. Such activities would assist us in developing this program as a community strategy in gang prevention efforts, one of the points made in the Council worksession. Hopefully this program could be organized such that it could be extended as a service to property owners as a lower cost alternative for voluntary removal of graffiti, an incentive for prompt removal within the ten days prior to abatement proceedings.

With the adoption of this proposed ordinance, we can move forward with a stronger voice to encourage prompt removal from graffiti as a responsible prevention strategy against gang recruitment and other detrimental activities within Milwaukie.

# CITY OF MILWAUKIE



POLICE DEPARTMENT  
2566 S.E. Harrison Street  
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222  
Phone (503) 659-2389

CHARLES A. MANSFIELD  
Chief of Police

November 19, 1991

Murphy Plywood Corporation  
P. O. Box 2810  
Eugene, Oregon 97402

Re: 10505 SE 31st  
Milwaukie, OR

Gentlemen:

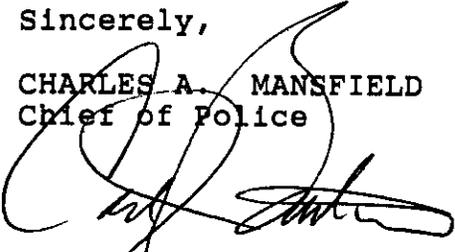
It has come to my attention that your building has been spray painted with gang graffiti. Since control of gang related activity is a priority with the Police Department, we are requesting your assistance in promptly removing the graffiti as it occurs. Usually, all that is required is spot roller or spray painting over the affected wall area.

Experience shows that quick response to graffiti incidents reduces or eliminates repeated occurrences. We continue to monitor all areas of the City for this activity to minimize its impact on youth and the livability of our community.

Please contact me personally if you have any questions or concerns about this matter.

Sincerely,

CHARLES A. MANSFIELD  
Chief of Police



Carl J. Bondietti  
Police Officer