

Violent, secretive fascist networks operating inside California police stations

By Tom Carter
7 August 2020

A whistleblower in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has exposed a violent right-wing extremist gang operating within the Compton station known as the "Executioners."

The "Executioners" network, according to a report on July 30 in the *Los Angeles Times*, is composed of sworn law enforcement officers who all have matching tattoos featuring "a skull with Nazi imagery" and an assault rifle. The gang "celebrates deputy shootings and the induction of new members with 'inking parties.'"

An estimated 20 deputies are members of the "Executioners" network, most of whom work at night. According to the whistleblower's claim, which was submitted on June 23 and more recently came to light, the "Executioners do not allow African-American or female members."

Instead of using official police channels, the gang members communicate with each other through WhatsApp. "Members become inked as 'Executioners' after *executing* members of the public," the whistleblower complaint states with emphasis, "or otherwise committing acts of violence in furtherance of the gang."

According to the whistleblower complaint, the gang "wields vast power at the Compton station," which covers an area of Los Angeles that is historically home to a large proportion of working-class black residents.

The whistleblower, deputy Thomas Banuelos, was targeted, threatened, and attacked by a member of the Executioners. "It was a very serious, violent and bloody assault which could have killed Deputy Banuelos," the whistleblower's attorney Alan Romero reported. A member of the Executioners "had him on the ground and was literally just bashing his head in with his elbow over and over and over again."

When another deputy attempted to anonymously report the attack on Banuelos through an internal tip line, his identity was exposed and turned over to the Executioners, and he found graffiti scrawled on the keypad in front of the station accusing him of being a "rat."

"I think the scariest thing," Romero said, "is that he did what he was supposed to do. He called the authorities, and they betrayed him. They turned him right over to the gang. It's a whistleblower's worst nightmare."

On the website *WitnessLA*, an inside source identified the three deputies in this video as members of the Executioners gang. On the video, which was published in June, the deputies savagely beat a man who is pinned to the ground.

"We have a gang here that has grown to the point where it dominates every aspect of life at the Compton station," Romero told the *Los Angeles Times*. "It essentially controls scheduling, the distribution of informant tips, and assignments to deputies in the station with preference shown to members of the gang as well as prospects."

When members of the right-wing extremist "Executioners" network do not get what they want within the sheriff's department, the gang members threaten "work slowdowns — which involve ignoring or responding slowly to calls." In addition, they set illegal "arrest quotas."

The "Executioners" are only the latest subject of a string of exposures of right-wing extremist gangs, networks, and cliques operating in California police stations.

Also in recent weeks, an occult tradition of "bending badges" by police officers in Vallejo, California was exposed by the website *OpenVallejo*.

According to the initial report on July 28: "a secretive clique within the Vallejo Police Department has commemorated fatal shootings with beers, backyard barbecues, and by bending the points of their badges each time they kill in the line of duty." This ritual was considered a "badge of honor" for the police officers in question.

The ritual was exposed when police captain John Whitney tried to put a stop to the practice and was fired, according to an unlawful retaliation claim he filed.

At the time of the captain's firing, according to the *OpenVallejo* report, "nearly 40% of officers on the force had been in at least one shooting. .. More than a third of those had participated in two or more. The department employs about 100 sworn personnel."

According to *OpenVallejo*, “the department’s most prolific shooters” are officers “Sean Kenney, Joe McCarthy and Steve Darden,” who together account “for nearly a third of the department’s 30 fatal shootings of the past two decades.”

“The cops who shoot someone bend the tabs on their badges,” stated one anonymous message received by *OpenVallejo*, which is believed to be from a “high-ranking Vallejo official with knowledge of the badge-bending tradition.”

“Kind of like a notch on the bedpost. It’s an indicator to each other how many hoodlums they’ve shot. They think it’s funny.”

According to the report, “For those invited into the group, a fatal shooting — their own or a colleague’s — is often followed by a barbecue or other celebration, according to current and former police department employees. The actual bending of badges occurs there or at roll call, an official law enforcement briefing that takes place at the beginning or end of a shift. Photographs indicate the first bend is often applied at the 4 o’clock point of a new initiate’s badge.”

The fascistic culture that surrounds these secretive networks has deep roots in California police departments. The Vikings police gang, which was exposed in Los Angeles during the 1990s, likewise featured tattooing rituals and was responsible for racist attacks on minorities.

“The Banditos, Spartans, Regulators, and Reapers are literal gangs that are claimed to exist within the Los Angeles law enforcement agency,” according to a 2019 report in *Law Enforcement Today*. “All members of the Banditos have tattoos of a skeleton wearing a sombrero, bandolier, and pistol.”

Other Los Angeles police gangs that have operated or are currently operating include the Hats, the Little Devils, the Jump Out Boys, the Grim Reapers, the “2000 Boys,” and the “3000 Boys.”

The “Jump Out Boys” were exposed in 2012 and earned international notoriety for their distinctively morbid tattoos and celebration of shootings.

A “Jump Out Boys” leaflet that was distributed to other deputies stated, “We are alpha dogs who think and act like the wolf, but never become the wolf,” and “We are not afraid to get our hands dirty without any disgrace, dishonor or hesitation... sometimes (members) need to do the things they don’t want to in order to get where they want to be.”

When a member of the “Jump Out Boys” shot someone, that member’s tattoos would be modified to feature smoke coming out of a gun.

It is significant that California’s city, county, and state government bodies are generally controlled by the Democratic Party, which has pledged nominal sympathy

with the George Floyd protests and with the overwhelming popular sentiments against police brutality and racism.

These same Democrats have failed for years to root out the violent, fascistic, racist networks of police officers operating in their own communities.

The fascistic culture that has developed among police officers alongside the epidemic of brutality is not an accident, but is bound up with the role of the police in capitalist society. These contingents of degraded and desensitized brutes are being recruited and cultivated for a specific purpose: the violent suppression of the class struggle.

According to the whistleblower complaint regarding the Executioners, the members of the fascistic network target other deputies for recruitment “based on the prospect’s use of violence against suspects or other Deputies. Nearly all the CPT [Compton station] Deputies who have been involved in high-profile shootings and out-of-policy beatings at CPT in recent years have been ‘inked’ members of the Executioners.”

The Executioners use “violence against other Deputies and members of the public in order to increase their standing within the criminal organization.”

Emboldened by Trump’s call to “dominate” and to use “overwhelming force,” the police in America constituted the shock troops of the nationwide efforts to suppress the mass demonstrations that broke out following the police murder of Floyd at the end of May.

To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>