



# Department of Justice

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Central District of California

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## **ATF UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION LEADS TO FEDERAL RACKETEERING INDICTMENT AND ARREST OF 61 MEMBERS OF SO. CAL.-BASED MONGOLS OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANG**

*LOS ANGELES* – Sixty-one members of the violent Mongols outlaw motorcycle gang were arrested today after being named in an 86-count federal racketeering indictment that alleges the criminal enterprise was involved in a wide range of criminal activity, including murder, hate crimes against African-American, assaults, firearms violations and narcotics trafficking.

As part of the racketeering indictment that charges 79 defendants, 10 people linked to the gang were arrested previously on various firearms, narcotics and assault charges. A total of 71 defendants have now been taken into federal custody as a result of the three-year investigation.

The racketeering indictment seeks the forfeiture of the trademarked “Mongols” name, which is part of the “patch” members wear on their motorcycle jackets.

“In addition to pursuing the criminal charges set forth in the indictment, for the first time ever, we are seeking to forfeit the intellectual property of a gang,” said United States Attorney Thomas P. O’Brien. “The name ‘Mongols,’ which is part of the gang’s ‘patch’ that members wear on their motorcycle jackets, was trademarked by the gang. The indictment alleges that this trademark is subject to forfeiture. We have filed papers seeking a court order that will prevent gang members from using or displaying the name ‘Mongols.’ If the court grants our request for this order, then if any law enforcement officer sees a Mongol wearing his patch, he will be authorized to stop that gang member

and literally take the jacket right off his back.”

Those arrested today include the former Mongols National President Ruben “Doc” Cavazo, several chapter presidents, and various officials of local chapters. In addition to the arrests today, authorities seized dozens of motorcycles which allegedly are part of the gang’s criminal enterprise.

During the investigation into the Mongols, the ATF, joined by investigators from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, the Montebello Police Department and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, seized 71 firearms, an explosive device and narcotics, including more than six pounds of methamphetamine.

A total of 162 search warrants were executed today in California, Nevada, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Florida and Ohio. In addition to the motorcycles seized today, authorities recovered numerous firearms.

The Mongols are an outlaw motorcycle gang that was formed in Montebello, California in the 1970s. There are as many as 600 members nationwide, with approximately 400 based in Southern California. Many of the Mongols were recruited from some of the most violent Los Angeles-area street gangs, including the “Avenues” and “18th Street.”

The Mongols have been in an escalating battle with the Hells Angels motorcycle gang since 2002 when the two groups engaged in a massive riot at a casino in Laughlin, Nevada. The Mongols have also been involved in an ongoing and violent feud with the Mexican Mafia over Mongols drug trafficking activities in areas controlled by the Mexican Mafia.

According to the indictment, members of the Mongols typically engage in crimes that include acts of violence – ranging from battery to murder – drug trafficking, money laundering, weapons trafficking, extortion, and, very frequently, violent attacks on African-Americans. Members also frequently conduct robberies, steal motorcycles, and engage in the theft of credit card account information to obtain funds for themselves and the organization. Members often commit their crimes and acts of violence with perceived

impunity because they believe victims and witnesses are afraid to testify against them or to cooperate with law enforcement for fear of retaliation by the larger Mongols organization.

During the investigation, four male ATF agents worked undercover and successfully infiltrated the Mongols to become “full-patch” members. Four female ATF agents also went undercover to pose as their girlfriends. The undercover agents had to undergo rigorous scrutiny by the Mongols, including polygraph examinations, to be accepted as members of the Mongols. They also had to develop and maintain “biker personas” to prolong their undercover investigation.

ATF Special Agent in Charge John Torres said: “Today, the leadership of the Mongols, one of the most violent outlaw motorcycle gangs, was taken down. For three years, four brave and dedicated ATF undercover agents put their lives on the line to infiltrate the Mongols. They made great personal sacrifices to protect our community and we are all extremely grateful.”

Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca stated: "This is another example of a unified law enforcement effort that has brought down members of a notorious outlaw gang. This investigation has made our streets safer".

Captain Al Salinas, of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department’s Organized Crime Bureau, commented: “Today, members of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, along with the Henderson and North Las Vegas Police Departments, in conjunction with federal agents executed numerous arrest and search warrants throughout the Vegas Valley. These warrants were the culmination of an investigation which began more than three years ago into outlaw motorcycle gang criminal activity which impacted the Vegas community. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to keep our neighborhoods safe.”

Those arrested today are expected to make their initial appearances this afternoon in United States District Court. Most of the defendants were arrested in the Los Angeles area, meaning that they will be brought to federal court in downtown Los Angeles to

appear before one of four United States Magistrate Judges who will determine if bond should be set for a particular defendant.

*An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.*

The investigation into the Mongols motorcycle gang was conducted by agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; the Montebello Police Department; and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. In addition to the United States Attorney's Office in Los Angeles, federal prosecutors in Las Vegas, San Diego, Denver and Reno have worked on the case.

The following agencies participated in this morning's takedown, providing valuable resources to conclude this investigation: California Highway Patrol, United States Marshals Service, Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, the Whittier Police Department, the West Covina Police Department, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the Glendale Police Department, the Bell Gardens Police Department, the Los Angeles Police Department, the Irwindale Police Department, the Baldwin Park Police Department, the Azusa Police Department, the Pomona Police Department, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department.