

## Questions to Panel Members

### **Police Questions/Responses:**

\*Note – we do not discuss investigative techniques or the details of ongoing investigations. Information on a specific case that has been adjudicated can be found through the Courts.

1. Is there any symbolism behind wearing black, i.e. Raiders?

Everyone wearing "Raiders" clothing is not a gang member. Some gangs wear clothing from professional or college sports teams; however it is still fashionable to wear these items.

Raiders' attire has been noted as being worn by known local Folk Nation "Crip" members. Nationally, Raiders attire has been noted as a signifier for Gangster Disciples, a Folk Nation style gang. An acronym for Raiders is used by Gangster Disciples as "Ruthless Ass Insane Disciples Running Shit." It is always possible that home grown gangs will select signifiers of their affiliation that will often defy traditional gang trends.

2. What does a cross represent?

There have been no reports in Virginia Beach of any gang significance to the wearing of a cross.

3. What do the beaded necklaces represent?

Beaded necklaces are a very common signifier in Virginia Beach of gang affiliation. The specific colors on the necklace and the pattern of the colors grouped together on the necklace can indicate affiliation to a particular gang and/or rank in the gang.

4. What do the bandannas represent?

Bandannas are the most common signifier of gang affiliation. Bandannas are held in very high regard by most gangs. When initiated into many gangs, members are given their bandana by higher ranking gang members and they are expected to show respect to their bandannas often with requirements like- folding the bandana a certain way, never letting the bandana touch the ground, never allowing another person to touch the bandana. Bandannas are often displayed in certain ways by certain gangs, only on the left side or only on the right side.

5. Do gang members mark yards of neighborhoods for future burglaries and if so, what is there mark?

This does not appear to be an issue or problem in Virginia Beach.

6. What is the connection between gang activity and illegal drugs?

There have been instances where gang members have been found to be in possession of illegal drugs and instances where gang members are involved in the sale of illegal drugs. It depends on the operation of the individual gang, with some having more involvement in drug activity than others. Some gangs prohibit their members from using illegal drugs with the exception of marijuana. There does not appear to be a specific, always present connection between drugs and every single gang.

7. How many murders were committed by gang members in the last few years?

Over the last few years, there have been two homicides that have been attributed to gang activity.

8. Do gangs require new recruits to kill an innocent victim or get a female minor pregnant in order to join a gang? What are the initiation requirements?

The most common initiation requirements appear to be –

- Being jumped into the gang (assaulted for a specific period of time.)
- Being blessed into the gang (subjects are simply allowed into the gang.)
- The commission of specific criminal activity (subjects are given criminal tasks to complete in exchange for entry into the gang.)
- Being sexed into the gang (subjects engage in sexual acts for admission into the gang.)

Committing a homicide is not known to be a gang initiation requirement in Virginia Beach.

9. What type of organizational structures do you find in local gangs? Are there ranking officers that other members must obey?

With the exception of some home grown gangs there is usually a ranking structure with ranks and titles given to members. In some gangs they mimic military titles such as Lieutenants, Generals, etcetera. In other gangs titles such as Prince, King, Queen are present. Some gangs have a mixture of titles; OG "Original Gangster" is often a term used for one of the highest ranks in a gang. Lower ranking gang members are expected to obey higher ranking members.

10. How do gangs recruit members?

Gangs recruit new members generally through peer pressure, intimidation, and threats.

11. Why do people join gangs?

Gang members typically join a gang in desire of the following things-

- Parties, Girls, Drugs, Alcohol
- Respect, Power, Protection
- Friends, belonging (Peer Pressure)
- Financial Incentives
- To Commit Criminal Acts
- Excitement/Thrills

12. Are all hand signs gang related?

Not every hand sign is gang related. Common hand signs in our area that do not appear specifically gang related are the "VA" hand sign with two fingers in the up position and two fingers in the down position. The two fingered "peace" sign at tilted angles appears to be very popular with young people today. And, obviously sign language for the hearing impaired would in no way be gang affiliated.

13. Are community substations still in operation?

The First Police Precinct utilizes a substation next to Creeds Elementary School. The Second Precinct uses one in the 2400 block of Pacific Avenue. There are no other substations currently being used.

14. Are gangs comprised exclusively of men/boys?

There are instances where gangs are exclusively male and exclusively female; however gangs now include females in their ranks.

15. Why do some police officers seem in denial of our problems with gangs, i.e. just a bunch of kids messing around...?

Juveniles with too much time on their hands and a sense of irresponsibility produce many nuisances and frequent calls for service that often do not elevate to the point of criminal activity and require nothing more than warnings from uniformed officers. In instances where gang affiliation is the cause of juvenile crime and where crimes are committed for the benefit of a specific gang, our officers are expected to be able to identify this behavior and respond accordingly.

Our department as a whole makes every effort to educate every officer in up to date gang problems and trends. Our Criminal Intelligence Unit frequently communicates with the Precincts that respond to criminal activity and calls for service to keep them informed of new, pertinent information as it is received. The concept of denial and excusing gang activity as kids messing around is not the mindset of our department as a whole.

16. What is being done in the Hampton Roads area in relation to gang activity? Is Virginia Beach working with our neighbor cities? What is being done to address gang activity?

There is no one method that proves to be effective on its own. It takes parental involvement, prevention, intervention, and enforcement approaches in conjunction with each other to have the best outcome in combating gangs. This is a community problem that requires community involvement.

In Hampton Roads, information is shared between our sister cities as well as our military neighbors. Court Services work together. The Virginia Gang Investigators Association, an established state wide organization, is comprised of representatives from numerous state and local law enforcement agencies.

There is also the Virginia Beach Gang Strategy Task Force which includes members from the Office of the Attorney General, Robert McDonnell, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, Virginia Beach Court Services Unit, Virginia Beach departments of Police, Human Services, Parks & Recreation, Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, the City Manager's Office, Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission, and Virginia Beach City Public Schools. They meet quarterly to discuss strategies for gang enforcement, prevention, and intervention.

Additionally, in Virginia Beach, we take the following initiatives to address gang issues:

- Present public awareness forums and lectures to community groups.
- Share Information among local, state and federal agencies.
- Train Department & City personnel.
- Work with other agencies and the state legislature to implement anti-gang policies and statutes.
- Juvenile Probation has partnered with city agencies to provide evidence based services for probationers and parolees identified as gang members.
- Develop a parent resource list/guide of programs available to families throughout the City.

17. Why did you decide to hold this forum?

The decision to hold this forum was made to educate the public about the trends and presence of local gangs, to give parents information about what to look for to identify gang activity and what to do should they find it. This forum also brought several community stakeholders together for this effort against gangs and gang activity. The Police, School System, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Juvenile Court Service Unit and the Community were all involved and brought to the table to participate in this event. The City recognized that we needed to be proactive and deal with this issue head on instead of waiting to address it at some point in the future when gangs potentially became a predominate problem.

18. Is a juggalo or juggalette a gang or a wanna-be?

The terms "Juggalo" or "Juggalette" refer to members of the fanbase of the Michigan rap group "Insane Clown Posse" and related recording artists at Psychopathic Records. Much of the philosophy of the group stems from the Dark Carnival, a fictional mythology that was carried as a theme in several Insane Clown Posse albums. Clown face painting is a common practice at Juggalo-oriented social events. The most common symbol that signifies the Juggalo following is the "hatchet man", a profile of a cartoon man appearing to run with a hatchet in hand.

It has been noted that many interviewed Juggalos/Juggalettes also claim affiliation to Folk Nation style gangs such as Crips or Gangster Disciples. Some groups of local Juggalos have also banded together as a home grown gang involving themselves with graffiti tagging, larcenies and assaults. This does not mean that everyone who views or identifies themselves as Juggalos or Juggalettes are gang members. It is mainly a subculture based around the music.

19. What are the main neighborhoods that have gang activity?

There are no neighborhoods that are immune to gang activity.

20. Do tattoo parlors report requests for gang tattoos?

Tattoo parlors are not required to notify the police of gang related tattoos.

21. What is the race and gender make-up of our local gangs?

The majority of our identified gang members are male. The race of our local gang members are not exclusive to any particular race or ethnic group.

22. Is Virginia Beach considering a gang hotline like Norfolk?

Currently, citizens are encouraged to call the Police Departments Special Investigations' Criminal Intelligence Unit at 427-1749 ([sidintel@vbgov.com](mailto:sidintel@vbgov.com)) or Crime Solvers with information pertaining to gang activity. They can remain anonymous and the Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) will research, analyze and verify the information. It is beneficial for CIU to be able to follow-up with the source of information if needed but it is not necessary for the caller to provide contact information. Additionally, information regarding gang activity can be provided to School Resource Officers or any city official whom the citizen trusts.

23. What are the roles of females in gangs and are there any all girl gangs in Virginia Beach?

Currently there are no certified female gangs in Virginia Beach. Female gang members have shown to be instrumental in providing intelligence to their affiliates on rival gangs. They are known to hold guns/drugs and act as decoys.

24. Why was the 1<sup>st</sup> gang started?

Initially gangs were created to provide protection of one ethnic group from another. Gangs have evolved since then and protection is not the exclusive motivator in today's gangs.

25. How many children are identified as gang members?

We have identified 322 gang members and associates in Virginia Beach which is approximately .0007 % of our population The majority of these individuals are juveniles.

26. What is the youngest gang member identified in Virginia Beach?

The youngest gang member identified in Virginia Beach was 10 years old.

27. What can be done about groups of kids hanging out on street corners all day & night who intimidate the neighborhood?

There are numerous approaches in dealing with youth whose behavior appears to have no purpose and who are creating an increased intimidation factor. Examples may include contacting the parents of the involved subjects, getting community leaders to approach and question them as to their purpose, or organizing a neighborhood watch to monitor their activities. When juvenile behavior constitutes a nuisance or criminal offense, citizens are encouraged to notify the police by contacting the police Non-Emergency number.

28. What is the city doing about gangs that have been created by students?

The formation and structure of local gangs are not a result of the members' student status. Just because a member attends a particular school does not mean that the gang is created or affiliated with that school. Regardless of student status, all gangs are handled in the same manner. Refer to the previous questions.

29. At a town hall meeting held at Tallwood High School back in December, a concerned citizen addressed a question to Chief Jacocks regarding increased gang activity at Tallwood. Chief Jacocks sought to downplay the significance of this activity stating that the gangs in Virginia Beach, for all intents and purposes are

wannabees, loosely organized at best, with no national affiliations. Why the radical shift in Chief Jacocks' assessment in a short 4 months?

From Captain Santos – sent to attendee via email.

"I was present at the same meeting at Tallwood High School and I heard both the question and the Chief's response. Chief Jacocks did not downplay the gang issue but responded in an accurate and responsible manner. There has been no radical shift in the assessment of our gang issue. As it was presented at the gang forum and at Tallwood High School, we do not have any evidence of any national gang affiliation and the groups that we deal with are loosely organized. What we have are local juveniles that are emulating what they see on an everyday basis through the Internet, music videos, movies and television. Regardless of how they evolved or why they exist, our position remains the same. If you call yourself a gang member, commit crimes like a gang member, then the Virginia Beach Police Department will treat you like a gang member. Right now, it is "cool" to be a gangster and to emulate that lifestyle. Chief Jacocks responded to the question in that exact manner when that was presented at the forum. This gang forum has been in the works for almost a year and Chief Jacocks is a member of the Gang Strategy Task Force that created the educational power point. With that being said, the members of the Virginia Beach Police Department have taken a proactive stance against this juvenile problem and we are not taking the issue lightly. We believe that most parents are not aware that their children may be at risk. That was the primary purpose of the forum which was to educate the parents on what to look for and then to offer them solutions to the problem. Again, I appreciate your comments and question and I hope that I was able to address your concerns."

### **Other Departments:**

30. What is being done, if anything, in the detention center to prevent gang recruitment or gang activity?

The detention center direct care staff attends annual training conducted by the Department of Juvenile Justice in gang awareness to help us recognize gang activities and their culture. We have a behavior management program set up which helps us prevent gang recruitment and gang activities. All residents are expected to follow rules of conduct while in detention. Our direct care staff monitor and supervise the youth. All resident wear the same clothing, gang

hand signs/slang/drawings/or talking about gangs is not allowed in detention. Known opposing gang member that have problems with each other are assigned to separate living units. Residents that instigate or challenge other residents to behave negatively or fight receives an appropriate consequence and counseled and given alternative ways to handle their differences.

31. What can we do to remove graffiti around the community?

If the graffiti is observed on private property, it should be reported to the Code Enforcement Division of the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation. They can be reached at 385-4421 or can be e-mailed at [HouseNP@vbgov.com](mailto:HouseNP@vbgov.com). Code Enforcement inspectors are assigned areas throughout the city and are proactively looking for graffiti. If found the owner of the property can sign a release form and the graffiti will be removed by a city contractor at no cost to the property owner.

32. Who is responsible for graffiti on personal property?

The Code Enforcement Division of the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation will remove graffiti from buildings, walls, fences, and other structures on private property that can be seen from any public right-of-way. They will not remove it from personal property such as vehicles, boats, etc.

33. There are a lot of graffiti in our area and would like to know what is being done about it?

The Code Enforcement Division of the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation investigates any graffiti complaint received and Code Enforcement inspectors proactively look for graffiti in their assigned areas. The supervisor for the area where the Wilson's live has been directed to have the inspector for that area look closely at the streets and playgrounds. The Administrator for the division has personally e-mailed the Wilson's advising them to call to report any graffiti.

