

## **POLICE PROMISE BROADER EFFORT TO BATTLE GANGS**

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Even as federal and Detroit law enforcement officials celebrate their successful weekend offensive against southwest-side **gangs**, they warn that **gangs** still lure young people.

"We certainly know this isn't going **to** make the **gangs** go away," said Philip Horbert, assistant special agent in charge of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms office in Detroit, on Monday.

"But this will have an impact. Many of these defendants play significant roles in the **gangs** of southwest Detroit."

A **police** official close **to** the investigation who asked **to** remain anonymous said some of those arrested were "lieutenants, hit men and dope dealers with big connections."

"For a while it's going **to** be quiet," the **police** official said. "Then you're going **to** get some splinter groups. Then somebody will emerge **to** take control."

**Police** Chief Isaiah McKinnon said the city and its **police** would continue working with **gang** members **to** decrease violence and find jobs for those willing **to** change their lives.

"We know the final result is not just **to** lock people up," McKinnon said. "There's no question that anytime you remove 300 guns, you are helping **to** bring peace **to** the community. But we know that they have the ability **to** get more guns and we know that there are others who are lying in wait **to** assume those particular positions."

McKinnon, Horbert and U.S. Attorney Saul Green spoke at a news conference Monday next **to** two tables laden with firearms taken during raids Sunday in Detroit, Taylor, Lincoln Park, Bay City and Saginaw.

Most of the 45 people arrested after the 19-month investigation were charged with violations of federal law involving guns. A few were charged with possession or sale of narcotics. About two kilograms of cocaine, in powder and crack form, were confiscated, as well as 500 pounds of marijuana, officials said.

Southwest Detroit **gangs** were selected because their size and influence had grown over the past two or three years, officials said.

The operation also was a response **to** the May 25, 1995, fatal shooting of Detroit **police** officer Jerry Philpot II by a **gang** member, officials said.

Philpot's widow, Diane Philpot, said she was glad **to** hear about the bust. But, she added, "It's a double-edged sword."

"On one side, you want the kids off the street who are doing the harassing and committing the violence," she said. "But there are so many kids who need help and need **to** be pulled out of it before it takes over their lives."

Detroit **Police** Cmdr. Herman Curry Jr. said the bust will leave remaining **gang** members watching their steps. "While they are out there looking over their shoulder for the Detroit **Police** Department, federal agents will be tapping on their other shoulder," Curry said.

McKinnon praised in particular five officers from the 4th (Fort-Green) Precinct for invaluable knowledge about **gangs** : Gerald Packard, Manuel Pompa, Walter Bates, Otha Craighead and Bert Brown.

In all, 45 of 66 suspects had been charged by Monday morning.

By late Monday afternoon, 33 had preliminary appearances in U.S. District Court. Twenty-nine were released on personal recognizance bonds; four were held for detention hearings today and Wednesday.

Ten suspects charged in the operation already were in custody, including 23-year-old John Adkins, who was extradited last week from Texas **to** Detroit **to** face charges related **to** the March 4 fatal shooting of 23-year-old Mark Levine in southwest Detroit.

Adkins allegedly broke through the door of Levine's home in the 2700 block of Springwells and shot him in the chest and stomach. Levine had testified against Adkins for shooting at him and Adkins had just gotten out of jail on bond, **police** said.

Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Michael Cox said the slaying was likely **gang** -related. A preliminary examination is scheduled for April 14.

Although others generally praised the operation, most echoed **police** comments that **gangs** are not going away easily.

"I've been battling **gangs** for a long time in my district and I've had legislation pending for the last three terms," said state Rep. Iona Varga, D-Detroit, whose district includes the southwest section of the city. "Unfortunately, Lansing doesn't feel it's a big enough problem yet. So maybe today, they'll get the message."

Outside Western High School across from Patton Park, 15- year-old sophomore Manuel Esquivel said he has no doubt those arrested will return **to** the streets. "They'll be back," Esquivel said. "And in the meantime, their little brothers will take over."

Angie Reyes, director of community development at Munoz Machine Products, which is part of the Hispanic Manufacturing Center, said that although **police** sweeps are necessary, more attention should be paid **to** preventing and addressing some causes of the **gang** problem, such as lack of education and employment.

"They have sweeps periodically but they have **to** keep doing it over and over again because they don't address the underlying issues," Reyes said. "It's just a response **to** a problem that already exists. It's like pulling the drowning person from a river instead of trying **to** keep him from falling in."

Caption: Photo ANDREW CUTRARO/Special to the Free Press

Federal agent Charles Houser removes seized guns from a display after a news conference Monday. Drugs were also taken in weekend raids.

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Memo: CORRECTION RAN April 9, 1997

getting it straight

\* A related article on Page 1A on Tuesday should have said Western High School is near Clark Park.

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