

MODE = MEMORY TRANSMISSION

START=OCT-26 12:51

END=OCT-26 12:56

FILE NO. = 031

NO.	COM	ABBR/NTWK	STATION NAME/ TELEPHONE NO.	PAGES	PRG.NO.	PROGRAM NAME
001	OK	8	94567028	017/017		

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The (New Orleans, LA) Times-Picayune 10-20-1999 P. 3 of 4

P. 19

In 1993, officers found 2.2 pounds of cocaine and a stolen pistol in Mickens' New Orleans apartment. Though he is often arrested in Guste, he does not live there, according to arrest records. At that time, he was on probation for a 1991 burglary conviction, police said.

Two days after this month's raid, their feelings buoyed by a productive operation, task force members went back to Guste on follow-ups and saw Mickens, Barty said.

The latest upswing happened Thursday, when a small reward came for investigators who plugged away to find suspects in the most recent double slaying, two brothers with criminal records.

Lamondo Allen, 20, was booked with two counts of first-degree murder. Less than a month before, his three-year prison sentence for carrying a concealed weapon was changed to probation, according to court records. He also was arrested in a similar raid last year.

Detectives are searching for his brother, Burnell Allen, 19, who also is wanted on charges of first-degree murder.

The fact that none of this year's victims were from Guste feeds stoop-sitters' theories that the problem devouring their neighborhood is not from within.

"It's all outsiders coming in here and causing this," said one woman who, like all her neighbors interviewed on Thalia, did not want to be identified.

Police have concentrated patrol efforts on trespassers, shaking down unfamiliar faces, residents said.

It makes for uncomfortable moments.

"My sister came here to visit, and they searched and patted her up and patted up her 14-year-old daughter," one woman said. "This is harassment, and it's very, very outrageous."

Others, usually the older residents who grew up in Guste, said they understand the officers' shakedowns.

"They're doing their jobs," one woman said.

Ellington said that though his officers are stopping many more people and logging more arrests, public complaints have not risen correspondingly.

"We're on the low scale of PID (Public Integrity Division) complaints," Ellington said. "In New York City, they had all kinds of public complaints when they began zero tolerance. We're not experiencing that."

Those residents who felt the sting of officers' most recent swarming, however, are not adverse to a police presence.

The (New Orleans, LA) Times-Picayune 10-20-1999 P. 4 of 4

P. 20

"If they just can patrol on bikes or on horses or just walk around here all the time, it would be different," said one young resident, who described officers' occasional rummaging through breezeway fuse boxes to search for drugs as overkill.

"They're all over here when there's a murder," she said. "But they're not here every day. We don't even have a substation. It's being here that makes a difference."

Police, however, said they don't have endless resources and try to use their troops to extinguish hot spots or, as Bardy described it, make the task force "change directions like an open field running back."



**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Office of Public Information**

ATF News Summary

Monday, October 25, 1999

The New York Times 10-24-1999 P. 1 of 5

P. 1

Computer Project Seeks to Avert Youth Violence

Columbine Spurs Pilot Program at Schools

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — Spurred by the deadly rampage at Columbine High School, the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is working with a threat-evaluation company to develop a computer program to help school administrators spot troubled students who might be near the brink of violence.

When the national pilot program, known as Mosaic-2000, begins testing at more than 20 schools in December, its technique of confidentially vetting and rating potentially violent students on a scale of 1 to 10 will come not a moment too soon for Steve Dackin, principal of Reynoldsburg High School.

"Columbine forever changed things for all of us," Dackin said of the school in Littleton, Colo., where two students shot 13 people to death before killing themselves in April.

Dackin knocked on wood in his office as he explained that his school, like most in the nation, had been spared gun violence yet had suffered very real waves of post-Columbine panic and concern for safety that must now be dealt with through safeguard programs like Mosaic.

"I see this as being a useful tool," Dackin said of the program, which is based on systems now variously employed by Yale University and federal courthouses to evaluate the potential for violence of individuals who make threats.

The Ohio chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union has criticized the pilot program as a "technological Band-Aid" driven by profiteering in parental fears. "We are understandably hesitant about any program designed to classify students or anyone else in society as potentially dangerous based on supposedly credible data fed into a black box," said Raymond Vasvari, legislative director of the Ohio ACLU.

The New York Times 10-24-1999 P. 2 of 5

P. 2

But the Ohio attorney general, Betty Montgomery, who favors the pilot project, noted that school administrators must already maintain confidential files on troubled students who might veer toward violence. Mosaic, she said, will be a wonderful additional tool based on a wide range of objective experience. Far from Big Brother, she said, Mosaic is nothing more than highly useful software -- a "three-ring notebook" to help worried school officials delve better into an existing area of responsibility.

"It brings together the shared experiences of many experts plus an evaluative piece," Ms. Montgomery said. "It says, 'Look, we've gone back and spoken to X number of people who have committed these crimes, and these are the risk factors we feel are present in their lives.' It collects these risk factors based on actual cases and organizes them in a way so we can have a consistent approach."

Mosaic programs, which are based on carefully worded questions about student behavior based on case histories of people who have turned violent, are designed by Gavin de Becker Inc., a private software company in California. They are intended to help officials discern a real threat amid the innocuous, if frightening, outbursts that regularly cause concern. For the last 10 years, the company has tailored risk-assessment programs for special law-enforcement concerns like threats of domestic violence and threats to the safety of members of the Supreme Court and the governors of 11 states, according to the company.

"I think it's a wonderful tool that has a great deal of potential, and I hope it's properly used by the schools," said **Andrew Vita, associate director for field operations of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms**, who found the Mosaic approach useful in investigating bombings at abortion clinics.

"We are trying to get some of our focus and resources up front of violence, in violence prevention, violence avoidance," Vita said. He noted that his bureau was also developing a program with the Department of Education to train school officials to cope with another area of concern underlined at Columbine -- homemade explosives in schools.

The Mosaic school program promises to provide questions carefully crafted from case histories by 200 experts in law enforcement, psychiatry and other areas. A variety of concerns beyond alarming talk or behavior will be included, from the availability of guns to a youngster's abuse of dogs and cats.

The questions allow a range of answers, from a student who has "no known gun possession," for example, to one who has "friends with gun access." Not all the questions might be effectively answered by administrators who control the software, officials conceded. But they said the more that were, the greater the credibility of the rating would be in the hands of principals facing the responsibility of deciding when to step in and call for help from specialists.

Dackin, the principal here, said Mosaic's immediate virtue would be in producing detailed documentation of its evaluation of a troubled student so that doubting parents could no longer challenge an administrator's judgment as too subjective. But Mosaic, he stressed, will at best be a useful instrument, with the school community's ultimate safeguard being in making sure that all student feel fully involved in school.

"It's easy to put up metal detectors," Dackin said, "but harder to create a system where students feel connected."

The program, which is still being formulated, is to be tested from grades one through 12, with the main focus being in high schools. All the sites have not been determined. It will involve only students who give cause for special concern, school and law-enforcement officials emphasize. "We certainly wouldn't want to develop any kind of tool for labeling students in any way," Vita said.

School officials here expressed confidence that the confidentiality of student records required by law would not be breached by Mosaic. They emphasized that the software would not be connected to any central data program.

"It sounds OK, so long as you don't wind up labeling kids," said Shelly Darby, who works at the Sun Tang Luck restaurant and is the mother of a second-grader here.

"There's kind of scary stuff out there," Ms. Darby said. "But there can be a real fine line between a kid out to get attention and a really troubled kid."

She drew an empathetic nod from Aron Ross, the assistant superintendent of schools in Reynoldsburg, a city of 35,000 just east of Columbus.

"A few dramatic, sad incidents have spawned hysteria," he explained, describing a nightmarish week of baseless rumors and countless alarms that caused midnight checks on school lockers after the Columbine killings. And through repeated meetings with anxious parents, Ross said, the question remains: What else can we do so it doesn't happen here?

"School people in my situation must respond to this new reality directly," he said. "It used to be a platitude, but no longer, about creating an environment where students and teachers are safe and feel safe."

The de Becker company describes itself as a specialist in high-stakes assessments. On its Internet site (www.gdbinc.com), the company has posted a detailed series of explanations and reassurances about the school software. "School administrators would use Mosaic-2000," the company asserts, "only in situations that reach a certain threshold (e.g., a student makes a threat, brings a weapon to school, teachers or students are concerned a student might act out violently)."

The system "merely brings organization and expert opinion to a process every principal already has," the company says.

The company has not determined the overall cost of the program, but Ms. Montgomery, the attorney general, described it as "very affordable" at less than \$10,000 for the high school.

The Mosaic systems are "very well thought out and valuable tools," said James Perrotti, chief of police at Yale University, which for five years has used the Mosaic-2 program to assess threats received by professors and students.

Perrotti, one of the experts helping to shape the Mosaic-2000 questions, said the system had offered effective warning about potentially violent situations that were nipped in the bud. "It's not a real predictor but it's the next best thing."

The New York Times 10-24-1999 P. 4 of 5

P. 4

Vita, the federal firearms official, says school officials need Mosaic and other tools to deal with an ever more complex threat in which relatively good students with access to guns may erupt because they feel victimized by bullies or by the school system.

"They're the hard ones for the school administrators to identify," Vita said. "It's easy to pick out the gang members with tattoos. It's these other people that kind of surprise administrators, and these are the ones they really need to identify."

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The New York Times 10-24-1999 P. 5 of 5

P. 5

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The Dallas Morning News 10-19-1999

P. 12

METRO REPORT

From Staff and Wire Reports

Police seize drugs, weapons at Grand Prairie lab

GRAND PRAIRIE - Grand Prairie seized an undisclosed quantity of amphetamine, methamphetamine, marijuana and weapons Monday at a drug lab in the 3300 block of Hardrock Road in north Grand Prairie, authorities said. Residents contacted police Oct. 11 to report a noxious odor in the area, which was the site of a lab explosion in February, said Detective John Brimmer, a spokesman for the Grand Prairie police. Detectives secured a search warrant and, after executing it, contacted the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency to help dispose of the hazardous materials, he said. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms was notified when three .50-caliber machine guns were confiscated. No arrests were made.

The Dallas Morning News 10-19-1999 P. 1 of 3

P. 13

NRA targets gun violators

Foes say new firearm controls are better remedies for crime

By David Jackson

WASHINGTON - The nation's largest gun lobby has taken to the airwaves and the halls of Congress to complain that the government has not been tough enough in enforcing existing gun laws. The aim: Defeat new laws.

"If Congress wants to tackle gun crime, let's start with the criminals who are never prosecuted," says one National Rifle Association ad running on cable television, including CNN.

Gun prosecutions are down - at the federal level. But the total number of gun cases is up nationwide, because prosecutions at the state and local level are increasing, Justice Department officials report.

Despite those numbers, the NRA argument has been effective as Congress continues to struggle with the issue, gun-control supporters acknowledge.

"The NRA was able to really derail a lot of momentum with this prosecution thing," said Kristen Rand, director of federal policy for the Washington-based Violence Policy Center.

New federal legislation seemed possible after the April 20 killings at a Colorado high school. Now things are much less certain, even after the Sept. 15 shootings at a Fort Worth church.

Gun-control supporters argue that the NRA's vision is a narrow one. The measures Congress is debating - expanded background checks on buyers at gun shows, the mandatory sales of child-proof "trigger locks" - are designed to prevent violence.

"How can anybody object to a process whereby we check to make sure that a person is legally authorized to have a gun?" Attorney General Janet Reno said.

New restrictions

Gun-rights supporters say new restrictions will have little impact on determined criminals. The best answer, they argue, is harsher punishment for those who abuse guns.

"We think it's hypocritical for them to call for new federal laws when the federal laws we already have are not being enforced," NRA spokesman Jim Manown said.

As with so many arguments over numbers, each side has pointed to different sets of statistics.

In national radio ads running during conservative talk shows, the NRA cites a 46 percent drop in prosecutions of criminal use of firearms for 1992-98. A report by the Republican staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee also used that figure, which is based on numbers from U.S. attorneys offices.

The Dallas Morning News 10-19-1999 P. 2 of 3

P. 14

In a television ad, the NRA uses a Syracuse University study on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the major enforcer of federal gun laws and a longtime NRA target. The report said ATF referrals to federal prosecutors fell 44 percent between fiscal years 1992 and 1998.

The Justice Department countered with numbers from its Bureau of Justice Statistics, which added up federal, state and local prosecutions. In 1992, those totaled 20,681. That number rose to 25,186 by 1996, the last year for which total figures are available.

The shift to more local and state prosecutions is part of a comprehensive approach to violent crime, Justice Department officials say.

Numbers game

"It's a sensible approach based on what is in the best interest of the community, as opposed to a numbers game of 'who has the most numbers,' " Ms. Reno said.

Justice Department officials say they prefer to have the federal government concentrate on bigger cases, while state and local prosecutors handle lower-level offenders. They say federal prosecutions of "major offenders" - cases resulting in at least five years of prison time - rose by more than 25 percent in the years 1992-97.

Susan Long, a Syracuse University professor who conducted the ATF study, said calculating weapons offenses can be tricky. She noted that many defendants are charged with multiple crimes and could be reported as drug or robbery offenders rather than gun violators.

"There is a lot of messiness here - how do you define a gun prosecution?" said Ms. Long.

Justice Department officials also noted that comparisons can be difficult because the decade-long drop in the crime rate has meant that there are fewer cases to prosecute.

John Scalia, a statistician with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, said many of the NRA's complaints start with 1992, which he called the high water mark of gun prosecutions.

That was due to a Bush administration program called Project Triggerlock, which stressed punishment of firearms violators.

The Clinton administration promoted what it called the Anti-Violent Crime Initiative, which emphasized local responses to the overall problem of criminal violence.

A Justice Department report to a Senate subcommittee concluded, "This expanded focus has yielded cases that are more difficult to develop but which can have a greater impact on community safety than individual firearms prosecutions."

That explanation did not persuade subcommittee chairman Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., that new laws are necessary.

"The federal government has extraordinarily effective gun laws already. They carry stiff punishments," he said.

Mr. Sessions said the NRA's prosecution complaint "is effective because it's true."

The Dallas Morning News 10-19-1999 P. 3 of 3

P. 15

To make it's case, the NRA spent \$ 850,000 in the first six months of this year, according to newly filed reports. Meanwhile, Handgun Control Inc., spent \$ 340,000. The gun control group did spend \$ 100,000 on television ads, to the NRA's \$ 50,000 for its ad campaign.

Gun-control supporters say the new proposals are designed to fill gaps left by the patchwork of different state and federal laws. Their top priority is closing a loophole that allows some people to buy weapons at gun shows without a background check.

On May 20, a month after the Littleton, Colo., killings, the Senate approved a gun-control package that gave authorities up to three days to conduct checks on gun show buyers. The House, however, failed to reach agreement after gun-rights supporters backed only a 24-hour delay.

So far House and Senate negotiators have been unable to resolve the differences.

If Congress does not act, gun-control backers say they are prepared to take the issue to voters next year.

So is the NRA, whose ads about federal enforcement may foreshadow their own 2000 election strategy.

"What I can tell you is that, through radio or television ads or otherwise, we are going to participate in the public discourse," Mr. Manown said.

ATF News Summary



Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Office of Public Information

ATF News Summary

Monday, October 25, 1999

Supplemental

The Northwest Indiana Times 10-23-1999 P. 1 of 2

P. 1

ATF raids Valpo gun store

Possible firearms violations object of feds' search of Fetla's

BY JEANETTE LACH Times Staff Writer

VALPARAISO — Agents from the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms** swarmed Fetla's Trading Co. Thursday night, armed with a federal search warrant seeking evidence for possible firearms violations.

The raid was part of an investigation that began last May when a juvenile sold a firearm stolen from Fetla's to an undercover narcotics officer from Porter County, said **Pat Berarducci, ATF spokesperson**. That juvenile was employed at Fetla's at the time, Berarducci said.

Agents arrived about 9 p.m. after closing time and didn't leave until early Friday. Berarducci would not say what evidence agents might have retrieved or exactly how long they were there. He did not know how many agents were on the scene.

The search warrant is sealed and Berarducci could not divulge what violations the ATF is investigating.

Steve Langer, the attorney for Fetla's and the owner's son, read a prepared statement to The Times.

"Fetla's fully and completely cooperated with and assisted ATF with its inspection," Langer said. "Fetla's will continue to cooperate with and assist ATF as necessary. To the best of our knowledge, no improprieties were found at Fetla's during their inspection."

The store was open for business as usual on Friday.

This week's visit by federal officials comes just two months after Fetla's was named as part of a lawsuit filed by city of Gary against 15 gun makers, six area gun dealers and three trade organizations. The lawsuit was inspired partly by an undercover investigation the Gary Police Department began in July that involved plainclothes officers posing as felons, juveniles and street gang members intent on violence when purchasing handguns. Video and audio tapes recorded during the sting show gun store clerks

The Northwest Indiana Times 10-23-1999 P. 2 of 2

P. 2

appearing to coach those who are legally prohibited from owning a handgun about how to get around state and federal gun laws.

Fetla's also had been the target of a foiled gun heist in 1997 by admitted members of the Gangster Disciples. Seven men were on their way from Lake County to steal dozens of guns for their gang, when Valparaiso police foiled their plans by discovering a handgun in one of their trucks while at a gas station in the city.

Fetla's is a federally licensed firearms dealer that also sells a complete line of sporting goods. The store is on Ind. 2 north of U.S. 30.

Nando Media / Associated Press 10-23-1999 P. 1 of 2

P. 5

FBI steps up counterterrorism efforts in capital

By DERRILL HOLLY

WASHINGTON (<http://www.nandotimes.com>) - The FBI, mobilizing for possible chemical or biological terrorism, has formed a special squad to respond to any attack in the nation's capital.

The 50-member National Capital Domestic Response Unit would work with about a dozen other federal, state and local public safety agencies in the District of Columbia, northern Virginia and suburban Maryland in the event of an emergency.

"We take every threat that comes up every day seriously," said Gregg Horner, a spokesman for the FBI's Washington field office. The unit was spun off about a month ago from a larger FBI operation to deal exclusively with threats and suspicious packages in Washington and its suburbs, Horner said.

"There are chemical and biological experts, bomb disposal squads, and evidence specialists involved in the effort," said Horner, who added that tactical weapons specialists are available when necessary.

According to an FBI official, trained specialists are called to deal with three to six suspicious packages a day in downtown Washington. If necessary, specialists from the Secret Service, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, the district's fire and rescue and police departments can mobilize hundreds of additional personnel.

"All the area law enforcement agencies are working together," said Sgt. Joe Gentile, spokesman for the Metropolitan Police Department. An investigator-liaison from the district's police force is assigned full-time to the FBI field office for counterterrorism purposes.

In August, various agencies helped cordon off a 20-block area of downtown Washington when a homeless man found a suspicious package in an alley behind a hotel. The leather valise contained welding tools that had been taken from a nearby construction site. The agencies also cooperated in the investigation of a pair of "anthrax" hoaxes at the Old Executive Office Building next to the White House and The Washington Post building in February.

The NATO summit in April was the type of event that the counterterrorism task force addresses. Another will be the New Year's Eve American Millennium Celebration on the National Mall.

"We'll all be working 12-hour shifts," Gentile said. The district's 3,520 police officers have been told that all leaves have been canceled between Dec. 27 and Jan. 15 to ensure public safety during the first weeks of the new year.

Associated Press 10-22-1999

P. 6

Pair linked to biker club to be held in drug case

DENVER -- A federal judge has ordered two suspected members of a gun and drug trafficking ring that was allegedly run by the Sons of Silence motorcycle club to stay in jail while charges are pending against them.

Denver U.S. District Judge Edward Nottingham on Wednesday overruled a federal magistrate who last week decided Willard Marvin Rice, 33, and Robert L. Snodgres, 43, could be freed on bond.

Prosecutors appealed to Nottingham, calling Rice and Snodgres dangerous.

The two men are among 42 members of Sons of Silence motorcycle club who were indicted by a federal grand jury this month for trafficking in guns and drugs.

The arrests resulted from a two-year investigation during which undercover agents from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms infiltrated the bikers' group.

Snodgres, of Lake George, told an undercover agent that he had murdered an FBI informant in Texas, prosecutors said.

Snodgres allegedly also told the agent he was prepared to murder an FBI agent and his family with explosives and that he had an "assassination kit" to use against "snitchers and cops."

The kit allegedly included a chainsaw, a body bag, masks, rubber gloves and a bullet-proof vest.

Rice, of Fountain, allegedly offered to kill a witness in a state criminal case involving the Sons of Silence.

Earlier this week Nottingham disagreed with the federal lawyers, however, that Douglas A. Luckett, 40, also charged in the crackdown, should be kept in jail while charges against him are pending.

Nottingham decided Monday that Magistrate Edward Schattler correctly let Luckett stay free on bond.

Luckett, of Colorado Springs, allegedly threatened to kill an undercover agent. He was freed to home detention, wearing an electronic monitoring device on \$ 25,000 bond secured by his sister's house.

(Fort Lauderdale, FL) Sun-Sentinel 10-22-1999

P. 7

LAST JOHN DOE GANG MEMBERS ARE CONVICTED

BY KATHY BUSHOUSE
Staff Writer

MIAMI -- The six remaining members of the John Doe gang, which last year terrorized Liberty City during gang turf wars, were convicted Thursday on federal drug and firearms charges.

The men -- Corey Smith, Latravis Gallashaw, Antonio Godfrey, Eric Stokes, Antonio Allen and Kettrick Major -- were among 15 arrested during a January raid that put an end to the drug-trafficking gang, which for three years had stalked the streets of Liberty City, prosecutors said.

All were charged with intent to distribute cocaine and marijuana. Smith, Gallashaw and Allen were convicted of possession with the intent to distribute cocaine and marijuana; Smith, Allen and Stokes also were convicted of firearms charges.

The six men will face sentencing Dec. 30.

"This marks the end of the reign of violence that was visited upon our community by this drug gang," said U.S. Attorney Thomas E. Scott in a prepared statement. "It also is the first step to providing closure for the victims and the families who have suffered at the hands of this drug organization. We are hopeful that the success of this case will send a message that federal and local authorities will serve and protect all law-abiding members of our community."

When gang member Anthony Fail broke off from the John Doe gang to form a rival faction, a bloody battle broke out on the streets, killing 12 people between August and December 1998. Fail was arrested and charged with three attempted murders, burglary with assault and possession of a firearm by a felon.

To combat the violence, the FBI, Drug Enforcement Agency, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Miami and Miami-Dade police departments started "Operation Paragon."

Nine defendants had previously pleaded guilty to drug and weapons charges.

The Las Vegas (NV) Sun 10-22-1999 P. 1 of 2

P. 8

Explosive suicide attempt gets 6 years

By Bill Gang And Kim Smith
LAS VEGAS SUN

The man whose apparent suicide attempt blew apart a portion of a Las Vegas apartment complex was sentenced today to six years in prison.

Michael McGilbra was also ordered to pay \$5,000 restitution for the damages caused by the Jan. 4 explosion.

McGilbra, who will be eligible for parole after serving two years, had pleaded guilty to a single felony charge in a deal that limited his potential prison time to no more than 2 to 6 years, although the crime carries a maximum penalty of 4 to 10 years.

If District Judge Joseph Pavlikowski had determined that the stiffer penalty was warranted, McGilbra could have backed out of the deal and gone to trial on the original two felonies and one gross misdemeanor.

Three children were cut by flying glass but not seriously injured when the northwest corner of the roof blasted off Building Five at La Fiesta Apartments, 1492 N. Lamb Blvd. McGilbra had been renting an apartment there with his girlfriend and two children.

"I'm sorry for what I did and I'm sorry for the kids who got injured," McGilbra, 40, said this morning in court. "I just wanted to kill myself and I didn't mean to hurt no one. I made a mistake doing the wrong thing."

McGilbra was attempting to commit suicide when he disconnected a natural gas line behind a stove and later lit a match to smoke a cigarette. The resulting blast tore the roof off his apartment and destroyed or damaged several other units.

McGilbra, who admitted the scenario to investigators, was treated only for second-degree burns.

The bulk of the evidence against McGilbra came from the defendant himself, who spoke from his hospital bed to city and federal investigators.

Special Agent Daniel Heenan of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms testified at a Justice Court preliminary hearing early this year that McGilbra initially said he had no idea what caused the explosion.

But the agent said that McGilbra admitted his culpability after being asked if his fingerprints would be found on a natural gas valve that had been disconnected behind a stove in his apartment.

Heenan and Las Vegas Fire Department Investigator Daniel Thomas testified that McGilbra said he tried to kill himself by opening the gas valve and inhaling the fumes, but that didn't work, although he fell asleep.

McGilbra admitted that when he awoke, he lit a cigarette with the intent of blowing himself up, the investigators continued.

The Las Vegas (NV) Sun 10-22-1999 P. 2 of 2

P. 9

While the resulting blast tore the roof off a building and destroyed or damaged several units, it didn't accomplish McGilbra's goal. He was hospitalized in the burn unit at University Medical Center for several days for treatment of second-degree facial burns.

Damage from the explosion was estimated at \$500,000.

Chicago Daily Herald 10-21-1999

P. 10

Man making pipe bomb hurt when device explodes

By Dawn Ruffolo Daily
Herald Staff Writer

A 25-year-old Schaumburg man is expected to need major reconstructive surgery on his hand after a pipe bomb he was making Wednesday blew up.

Police said Joseph R. Ferri, of 1408 W. Arlington Lane, suffered flash burns to his leg and chest, while the explosion took off part of his hand.

The top of the pipe bomb ripped a hole through the ceiling while the bottom shot through the floor, police said.

"He's very lucky to be alive," Sgt. Ed Doone said.

It's unclear why Ferri was making the pipe bomb, but he was conscious and admitted making the device, police said.

Criminal charges are pending against Ferri. Police declined to describe the nature of the explosive.

The bomb apparently went off as Ferri was making it because he caused a spark, igniting the explosive, police said.

That's one way bombmakers typically injure themselves when making pipe bombs.

Lt. Mike Marchese said police notified the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms about the device.

Ferri's parents and girlfriend were at home at the time of the incident, but were not injured, police said.

Police received the initial 911 call about the explosion at 7:48 p.m. from a member of the man's family, authorities said.

After dealing with the injured man, police searched the rest of the house to determine if there were any other bombs in the house but found none.

The Cook County Sheriff's bomb squad was also called in to advise Schaumburg police on the pipe bomb.

Despite the injury to his hand, Ferri was listed in good condition Wednesday night at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge where he was being held for observation.

Ferri's overall health and vital signs were good despite the condition of his hand, a hospital spokeswoman explained.

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ATF News Summary



Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Office of Public Information

ATF News Summary

Friday, October 22, 1999

MSNBC / Channel 3 Las Vegas, NV 10-21-1999 P. 1 of 2

P. 1

Crime Tracker: Felons and Firearms

Nina Radetich and Brian Sassor

LAS VEGAS, Oct. 21—Fugitives and ex-cons trying to get lost in the crowd come to our valley more than any other city to live their lives of crime. They're robbing you, burglarizing your homes and carrying guns. Some of them may even be living on your street. But something is being done to put them back behind bars.

LAST YEAR, POLICE ACROSS THE VALLEY busted more than 500 ex-felons for carrying guns.

Some of those convicts walk away with probation or just days in jail. But thanks to one program, the ex-cons that cops call the worst of the worst are out of our neighborhoods for much longer.

Boxer George Gordon was on top of the world in 1994. The North Las Vegas boxer fought his way here to the amateur slugfest called the

"Toughman Championship." Gordon punched his way to the title fight at the MGM, walking away with 50-thousand bucks.

But it's what Gordon did as he walked these North Las Vegas streets that made him a feared toughman. Neighbors and police say he terrorized the neighborhood by bullying residents, carrying guns and dealing drugs.

Gordon didn't seem scared of anybody, not even cops. They say he was willing to threaten, fight and hurt officers like this undercover drug agent.

"I consider him a menace to society," says one undercover drug agent. "One mistake could cost you your life or your partner's life."

And Gordon did all this as an "ex-felon."

He had already served prison time for shooting a security guard but was released on parole. Later, he was busted again for drugs and then received probation.

But when police arrested him with more drugs and a gun, the feds stepped in. This time, carrying a gun, having drugs being an ex-felon sent Gordon away to federal prison for 12 and a half years with no parole.

The arrest is what gets guns out of the hands of Gordon and other ex-felons. But it's a unique law enforcement effort that's putting them behind bars with no chance to use a gun or do much of anything else for a long time.

"We want all these criminals to be terrified that we are doing this program," says an undercover agent.

Terrified, they'll end up like ex-cons other serving lengthy prison sentences. Instead of being charged with a state crime which usually ends in probation, many are now facing federal charges with an average of almost five years in federal prison and no chance for parole.

BJ Zapor with the ATF says, "If you're a felon and you have a gun, we're going to come after you with everything."

MSNBC / Channel 3 Las Vegas, NV 10-21-1999 P. 2 of 2

P. 2

Zapor, the head ATF agent in town, keeps a close eye on the repeat offenders police bring. He picks out the worst of the worst of violent criminals caught carrying weapons.

U.S. Attorney Tom O'Connell then takes the ex-cons to court where there's no revolving doors.

"I think reality hits when you hear you have 15 years to do."

It's a reality former toughman George Gordon faces everyday.

"George Gordon is an example of what I consider a guy who thought he could get away with anything and was proven wrong," says O'Connell.

So many ex-cons have been proven wrong here, the feds say it's one of the most successful programs in the entire nation.

Clark County District Attorney Stuart Bell agrees with that and says he welcomes the help.

He thinks it's one of the reasons we've seen the valley's crime rate drop the past four years.

The feds are also punishing crooks like violent repeat-robbers under their stricter guidelines.

The overall goal is to take some pressure of the state court system and punish the worse crooks with longer federal prison time.

The (New Orleans, LA) Times-Picayune 10-21-1999

P. 3

ATF AGENT TO BE HONORED IN D.C. FOR 7TH WARD PROBE *5 SERVING LIFE SENTENCES IN DRUG TRADE, SLAYINGS*

By Pamela Coyle Staff writer

Three years ago, when Sue Pecora arrived from Philadelphia, she barely knew the names of New Orleans neighborhoods, let alone specific streets.

Now she knows one neighborhood all too well - the 7th Ward, where, as an agent for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Pecora helped dismantle a loosely organized gang that dispensed murder along with drugs.

For her work in the 7th Ward Soldiers investigation, Pecora, 33, will be honored today in Washington at a ceremony at the White House. In its annual Top Cops awards, the National Association of Police Organizations spotlights one case in each state and honors some of those who worked it.

The 7th Ward Soldiers case, which already has sent five defendants to federal prison for life, was the pick for Louisiana. Pecora, who won't be able to attend, will receive an honorable mention award. The 7th Ward investigation wasn't among the top 10 cases whose officers have been designated at Top Cops.

Pecora is the only honoree from Louisiana.

"It is a great honor," said Pecora, who also credited other ATF agents and New Orleans police officers.

Authorities say the gang ran an "open-air drug market" around Larabre and North Rochemore streets and protected their turf by killing rivals and witnesses, committing at least six murders and several attempted murders. Piecing the case together was not easy, Pecora said.

"There were plenty of times I was fed up, I was done with this case. People were uncooperative and didn't want to talk and didn't want to be found," Pecora said.

Her doggedness drew the wrath of one defendant, who verbally attacked Pecora and another ATF agent during a sentencing hearing in September. Brian Jones, who received a life sentence, accused the agents of following him "like a dog" and stopping him when his young son was in the car.

Pecora said that they stopped Jones, one of 11 people convicted, between two and four times over a three-year period.

"We never tried to hide what we were doing," she said. "We never really made a secret. We would tell people it would stop out here and they didn't believe us."

Nava Ade House Burns Second Time

Journal Staff Reports

A home in the Nava Ade subdivision survived a scathing fire six months ago only to burn down Wednesday, two days before its occupants were to return, the Santa Fe city fire marshal said.

City firefighters arrived just after 6 a.m. to find the single-story, three-bedroom home off General Miles Road fully engulfed, said Fire Marshal Ted Bolleter.

Propane tanks for construction heaters inside the home exploded, preventing firefighters from fully attacking the blaze at first, he said.

"There were 54 gallons of propane in the building, several bottles ruptured," Bolleter said.

Six months ago a neighboring structure still under construction was an arson target, Bolleter said. He said authorities are building a case against a suspect now jailed on unrelated charges.

That fire damaged one wall and blew windows out of the building next door, the one totally destroyed Wednesday morning. Bolleter said the owners vacated that home while it was repaired. They planned to move back Friday.

Bolleter said he had no further information on the family. He wasn't sure of the damaged home's address. The fire's cause is under investigation by local arson investigators and federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents coincidentally in town for training exercises.

None of the 18 fire and medical personnel who responded were injured; the fire was under control within a half hour, Bolleter said.

The (Montreal, Canada) Gazette 10-21-1999 P. 1 of 2

P. 5

Tobacco smugglers escape jail terms

BY WILLIAM MARSDEN

SYRACUSE, N.Y. They were both heavyset men with big bellies and bulging, round shoulders that strained the seams of their Sunday-best suit jackets. They stood before U.S. District Judge Thomas McAvoy, contrite and sorrowful, hoping against hope that they didn't get all dressed up only to be sent to jail.

Both men pleaded guilty last year to charges relating to a huge tobacco-and-liquor-smuggling ring that effectively cheated the Canadian, Ontario and Quebec governments of more than \$1 billion in taxes. And while that figure may sound huge, it's probably low. The Americans are counting only what they could trace.

Twenty-four people have been arrested in the case and all have pleaded guilty to at least one charge in the hope of winning reduced sentences. Some of them were facing at least 20 years.

Although the crime primarily damaged Canadian treasuries, it took the U.S. and its enormous law-enforcement resources - FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, customs, state police, border patrol and Internal Revenue Service - to stop it.

On Tuesday, McAvoy, a ruddy man with snow-white hair and broad girth, sentenced three of the conspirators to jail terms of seven, four and two years.

Yesterday, Tim Glines, 42, and Dick Rancati, 68, were hoping to escape with simple probation.

Glines, who now lives in California, claimed he was only a minor player brought in by his wife, Vicky, who was eager to help her father, smuggling kingpin Larry Miller, make millions. Glines's participation was an effort to "keep the family together."

Helped Build Case

Glines also emphasized that he had co-operated with police and helped them secure guilty pleas from his wife, Miller and Miller's son Nick. He had

also supplied information that led to the conviction of Northern Brands International Inc., which RJR Nabisco had set up to oversee the smuggling of its Canadian-brand cigarettes. The company paid \$15 million in fines and forfeitures.

But Glines tripped up when he told the judge he hadn't realized that what he was doing was illegal. U.S. District Attorney Greg West quickly produced the transcript of an undercover tape on which Glines and his wife say they know what they are doing is illegal.

Rancati, a Las Vegas casino manager and Miller associate, claimed he fell into the smuggling business through no fault of his own. He had gone to the

The (Montreal, Canada) Gazette 10-21-1999 P. 2 of 2

P. 6

Akwesasne Mohawk reserve near Cornwall, Ont., to help set up a casino in 1992 and when work was delayed, he found himself "in a difficult financial situation" and was forced to organize tobacco shipments for Miller.

Glines moved money for Miller and in the end pleaded guilty to one count of money-laundering. Rancati pleaded guilty to failure to report tobacco and liquor shipments.

McAvoy said he didn't believe either of them were criminals and gave them each three years' probation.

Glines headed back to California to search for a teaching job. And Rancati returned to Las Vegas - but not before his lawyer warned him not to go to Canada.

"They might have a warrant out for you," he said.

"Oh no, I'm never going to Canada," Rancati assured him.

The Fort Worth (TX) Star-Telegram 10-20-1999 P. 1 of 2

P. 7

Motel arson kills woman; 15-year-old is arrested

Jack Ruby once lived at the Oak Cliff property.

By Mary Doclar, Star-Telegram Writer - Dallas Bureau

DALLAS - A woman was killed and three other people were injured yesterday when an arson fire roared through an Oak Cliff motel that was once home to Jack Ruby but most recently has had a history of fires, code violations and criminal activity.

Della Renae Dixon Washington, 37, died of burns and smoke inhalation at The Circle Inn Motel, 223 S. Ewing Ave., the Dallas County Medical Examiner's Office said. Three people suffered broken bones and cuts when they leaped from the third story to escape the flames, fire officials said.

Late yesterday afternoon, a 15-year-old was arrested in connection with the 5 a.m. blaze. But fire officials said they could not disclose the teen-ager's role or whether more arrests were expected.

Police determined that the fire was set after finding several points of ignition, fire investigator David Hickman said. Agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms were helping investigate the blaze, he said.

The fire caused nearly \$ 200,000 in damage, Fire Department spokeswoman Barbie Block said.

About 60 people were evacuated to a nearby recreation center, and Red Cross officials were providing emergency assistance and relocation help, Block said.

The Circle Inn, which has motel rooms available for long- and short-term use, has been "a hotbed of bad behavior for a long time," she said.

In 1963, the motel was home to Ruby, who fatally shot Lee Harvey Oswald as the nation watched on live television shortly after Oswald was arrested in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963. Ruby, a Dallas nightclub owner, was living in unit 207 at the time of his arrest, said Gary Mack, archivist for The Sixth Floor Museum.

Since 1983, the property has had 20 fires, with the last one occurring in July, officials said. Citations were issued in July 1998 after inspectors found only two working smoke detectors in 31 units, but the problem was fixed when inspectors made a follow-up visit in November, Block said.

The Fort Worth (TX) Star-Telegram 10-20-1999 P. 2 of 2

P. 8

Police records show 90 calls and 42 criminal offenses at the property since January 1998, Sgt. Jim Chandler said. The offenses included criminal mischief, rape, burglary and theft, he said.

In 1995, Dallas police conducting a routine safety inspection found a couple and their 17 children living in a two-bedroom efficiency that was in total disrepair, police said. Child Protective Services removed the children from the home.

"It's just one of those locations that's a thorn in the side of the community," Chandler said.

The Fort Worth (TX) Star-Telegram 10-20-1999 P. 1 of 2

P. 9

Man sought after lab, machine guns found

Neighbors complained about a Grand Prairie business.

By Anthony Spangler, Star-Telegram Writer

GRAND PRAIRIE - Police are preparing an arrest warrant for the owner of a Grand Prairie motorcycle repair shop where last week they found equipment used for a narcotics lab, drugs, Nazi flags and three military machine guns.

The warrant says the owner is suspected of manufacturing and selling narcotics. Police did not identify him.

Several neighbors complained of strong noxious odors believed to be coming from the business, Viking Mechanical at 3312 Hardrock Road in northwest Grand Prairie.

Firefighters investigated the complaint and discovered chemical vats inside a barn-sized metal shed on the property, which is surrounded by a 6-foot-high metal fence and 12-foot-high gate, according to a search warrant affidavit.

Nazi flags with swastikas, three .50-caliber machine guns, and substances believed to be amphetamine, methamphetamine and marijuana were found in the business, according to police and a list of items seized during the search Oct. 11.

"We are going to look at whether this guy was involved in any hate groups," said Detective John Brimmer, Grand Prairie police spokesman.

"We want to know whether he was manufacturing and selling drugs to support or engage in any kind of hate activity. "

Drug Enforcement Agency agents were called to disassemble the lab and handle hazardous chemicals found inside the business, Brimmer said.

Agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms are conducting a separate investigation to see if federal weapons charges are appropriate, Brimmer said.

Three .50-caliber machine guns - heavy automatic weapons normally mounted on tripods or military vehicles - were found in a wooden crate in the building, police said. No ammunition was found.

"We are still determining whether the guns were properly registered," said Don Manross, assistant special agent in charge of the ATF Dallas field division.

Under federal law, each time an automatic weapon is bought and transferred to a new owner, it must be registered. Applicants' fingerprints and photos are taken as part of the registration

The Fort Worth (TX) Star-Telegram 10-20-1999 P. 2 of 2

P. 10

process. Local police agencies must approve the transfer or registration transactions of automatic weapons, Manross said.

Grand Prairie police and ATF officials could not say whether the three military machine guns had been registered.

Residents of the north Grand Prairie neighborhood said the business had frequent visitors at odd hours.

"Cars would come and go all night long," said Roy Dunagan, 58, who lives across the street. "It's been pretty quiet over there since police raided the place. "

Dunagan said an explosion inside the shed about a month ago shattered his living room window.

"At first, we thought a plane had crashed or something," he said.

"When we looked outside, there were blue and white flames pouring out of the building. "

Gun Manufacturer Requires Dealers to Sign Code of Ethics

By David R. Ottaway and Barbara Vobejda
Washington Post Staff Writers

Smith & Wesson Corp., the country's leading handgun manufacturer, has told dealers selling its products that they must immediately sign a code of ethics, the first time a gunmaker has attempted to assert formal control over the sale and distribution of its products.

Company officials said dealers who refuse to sign or are accused of abetting illegal sales will be banned from selling Smith & Wesson products.

The action comes amid a backdrop of lawsuits by 29 cities and counties, many alleging that gun manufacturers have been grossly negligent in refusing to take responsibility for the marketing of their weapons. The company's ethics code is unprecedented in the closely held firearms industry, which has traditionally resisted attempts to control the sale of firearms.

In a letter mailed in mid-July, Smith & Wesson gave its 3,500 registered dealers 60 days to pledge that they would avoid sales practices that facilitate the illegal flow of guns to young people and criminals. The two-page "Stocking Dealer Code of Responsible Business Practices" commits dealers to obey all firearms laws; to only sell Smith & Wesson guns with safety locks; and to closely monitor buyers to avoid illegal purchases.

Among the most serious accusations leveled against dealers is that they turn a blind eye to "straw purchases," sales to individuals acting on behalf of others whose criminal backgrounds would bar the transactions.

"Smith & Wesson has never been a follower in this industry," said Paul Pluff, manager of retail sales for the Massachusetts company. "We kind of like to set the benchmark."

He said "well over three-quarters" of the 3,500 dealers authorized to sell its guns have already signed and returned the code of ethics. "Those who have not responded in the next 30 days will no longer be registered Smith & Wesson dealers," he warned.

Pluff denied his company was responding to pressure from the lawsuits, saying that work on the code had been underway for more than a year. But he said he expected other manufacturers to follow Smith & Wesson's lead in light of the legal climate.

"It sounds like the industry is starting to move. It's clearly because of these lawsuits," said Brian Siebel, senior attorney at the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, which is assisting several cities in the lawsuits. "It proves that every gun manufacturer can control distribution of its guns, a point they've denied for years."

"I think they are doing it hoping this will protect them legally," said Stephen Teret, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research in Baltimore. "They want to be able to tell juries, 'Look, we required the dealers to follow this pledge of good conduct.'"

Teret said the main value of the ethics code was that, for the first time "gun manufacturers recognize they should follow a gun beyond the factory door."

A major theme in the lawsuits filed against gunmakers is that the companies have failed to place any controls on distributors or dealers. As a result, they have shirked all responsibility for the crime caused when their products fall into wrong hands, cities and gun control advocates allege.

"I think it's a great first step," said Wayne Roberts, spokesman for the 8,000-member National Alliance of Stocking Gun Dealers. "Now we need to see how it works and where the flaws are."

One flaw Roberts cited was that wholesalers are not covered under the new policy, so that some smaller dealers could still purchase products from wholesalers without signing the ethics code.

However, Pluff said Smith & Wesson has contracts with its 22 wholesale distributors that include an even more stringent ethics code covering marketing practices.

The company's mid-July letter to dealers declared that "the manufacturing, distribution and sales of firearms are significant and important undertakings for our businesses and the community."

In addition to their signatures on the code, the company asked dealers to provide proof that their federal licenses were up to date, along with pictures of their shop storefronts and other details to ensure they were legitimate.

The company initially gave dealers 60 days to respond. But after learning that some dealers had not received or responded to the letter, the company granted an additional 30 days.

Some in the industry said they were most struck by Smith & Wesson's warning that it would cut off any dealer accused of questionable business practices by police or government officials. That is significant because a number of the city lawsuits name dealers as defendants along with the manufacturers.

"We have a problem with that in that [the dealers] have not been convicted of anything," said Sanford Abrams, vice president of the Maryland Licensed Firearms Dealers Association.

The (New Orleans, LA) Times-Picayune 10-20-1999 P. 1 of 2

P. 15

ARSON DETECTOR SHOWS HOW TO TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME

PUPPY TRAINED TO SNIFF OUT SOURCES OF FIRES

By Richard Boyd St. Tammany bureau

Emma, a 10-week-old black Labrador bundle of glistening, slobbering, kissing energy, paraded in front of nearly 80 young children Tuesday and acted just like any healthy, happy puppy would.

But Emma is more than just a healthy, happy puppy. She is one of four highly trained arson detection dogs in Louisiana and the first to be based in St. Tammany Parish. Officials of the Covington area's Fire District No. 12 introduced their newest member to the public Tuesday at the department's North Park Office Park fire station.

Confronted by a busload of preschoolers and first- and second-graders from nearby Northlake Christian School, Emma seemed more interested in interacting with the children than with showing off her skills.

But after handler Rick Jones, a firefighter, placed several objects on the ground, Emma quickly spotted the one soaked in gasoline, which is commonly used in arson fires, and she was rewarded. Then, straining at her red leash and collar boasting a firefighter's badge, she gave hearty tail wags and wet licks to the youngsters as they petted her.

In mid-September, Jones and Emma returned from five weeks of canine arson-detection training at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy near Augusta, the only law enforcement training academy in the United States offering such a course.

Emma had been turned over to the academy by a retired Florida couple, and State Farm Insurance Co. paid to have her trained, paid to send Jones to the academy and donated her to Fire District No. 12.

Other trained arson detection dogs in Louisiana, all sponsored by State Farm, are used by the Shreveport Fire Department, the state Fire Marshal's Office in Baton Rouge, and the federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms field office in New Orleans.

Fire District 12 board member Mike Strain said Emma becomes an important new weapon for the department. He and Chief Randy Piwetz said she will be available to any fire department in the parish, or even the state.

Jones said he feeds Emma from a pouch he always carries because that is part of the training reinforcement. "She will never be fed from a dish or bowl like you feed your dogs at home," he told the young audience.

He said he keeps Emma at home and she is a welcome pet for his two young children.

Sheriff Jack Strain is donating a used canine patrol car to the fire district for Jones to use to take Emma to fire scenes, Sheriff's Office Capt. Tim Lentz said. Now she travels in a large cage in the back of a pickup.

The (New Orleans, LA) Times-Picayune 10-20-1999 P. 2 of 2 P. 16

Strain, a veterinarian, said dogs are capable of storing several scents in a sac behind the ear and, when trained, can tell a potential arson accelerant from other smells.

Bob Nowlin, a State Farm agency field executive from New Orleans, told the youngsters that arson has reached epidemic levels in the United States. Each year arson kills nearly 500 people and property losses exceed \$1 billion, he said. State Farm has paid for the training of more than 100 arson detection dogs working in 35 states and Canada.

"It is in our best interest to help get these dogs trained and donated to fire departments," he said. Nowlin said he does not know how much it cost the insurance company to train Emma and Jones.

The (New Orleans, LA) Times-Picayune 10-20-1999 P. 1 of 4

P. 17

DRUGS CRIPPLE N.O. COMPLEX

POLICE SAY THE HEROIN TRADE HAS A DEATH GRIP ON STREETS

By Petula Dvorak Staff writer

Fighting heroin on Thalia Street makes most cops who work in the district known as the "Bloody 6th" feel like Sisyphus in Hades.

A hot spot for heroin since the days when the drug was called "horse," the battle seemed to be won in 1997, when Guste was the safest public housing development in the city and the only one with no homicides.

Then, like the rock that always rolled downhill once the mythical king Sisyphus pushed it to the top, the progress made in 1997 was lost, and Guste turned into a killing field, with five homicides last year and five dead so far this year, including a double slaying this month, according to police statistics.

An aberration in New Orleans, Guste is one of the only public housing developments in the city where crime is on the rise.

The battle is won and lost with small steps forward and back in the heroin alley of Guste. After this month's double homicide, detectives plotted, planned, then hastily executed an operation to net the primary dealers in the area. Two days later, out on bond, one of the drug suspects stared down the officers patrolling the housing complex.

"It's deflating for them," said Lt. Bob Bardy, commander of the investigations unit in the 6th District. "But the officers are very resilient, and they'll keep coming back."

Veteran investigators say the extremes in violence at Guste have their roots in the tempestuous drug trade, the comings and goings of successful dealers and the trends among dopers. Heroin is hot right now.

"Many of our homicides are narcotics-related," 6th District Capt. Michael Ellington said. "There's payback; there's revenge for bad dope; there's owed money."

None of the five people killed in Guste this year lived there. They were from Kenner, Metairie and eastern New Orleans. Most of the people arrested in Guste don't live there, either.

Some residents say it is the sporadic police concentration, such as this month's drug raid, rather than a steady, strong police presence that allows violence to seep through.

The problem area is a specific courtyard and the strip of Thalia alongside it that looks like a speedway, with laundry fluttering on clotheslines like racetrack pennants. It provides access to three blocks of apartments, but the residents' main artery to their homes also attracts their biggest problems.

The courtyard is filled with children and chained pit bulls during the day. The strip is a runway for young rowdies to gun the engines of their hot rods, and they'll rev them again and again if the right group of girls is on a porch.

At night, however, the courtyard has been ablaze with guns, and the roadway serves as a getaway route.

In July, police said two Jefferson Parish residents making a heroin pit stop were gunned down there as they pulled out of a driveway. A third person in the car shoved the bleeding occupants aside to careen down the speedway and deliver his dead cohorts to their Metairie doorstep.

The homicide count at that point was three, making the formerly safest housing development close to one of the city's deadliest, according to police statistics.

Long before the statistic-gathering technique known as COMSTAT, short for computer statistics, came to the New Orleans Police Department, Bardy ended and began each of his shifts by rearranging the pushpins on the wall map by his desk to highlight the daily outbreaks. By the time the July killings occurred, it was obvious to him that the 2400 block of Thalia was bleeding, and he concentrated his task force on the area.

Along with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Safe Home Task Force, the officers mounted an investigation. Sgts. Darryl Albert and Steve Gaudet coordinated their troops to watch the apartments at 2417 Martin Luther King Blvd., the heroin den thought to be the epicenter of the housing development's cancer.

Then, double tragedy struck the block. On Oct. 4 at 4 a.m., two young men were killed, another heroin deal gone bad, police said.

Deshawn Moore, 25, and Derrick Jacque, 24, both of eastern New Orleans, were found lying in a Guste courtyard after residents in the 2400 block of Thalia heard gunshots and called police shortly before 4 a.m.

So the task force kicked into high gear and launched a raid that evening, not yet knowing the connections to the deaths beyond the surefire theory that drug dealing equals violence, Bardy said.

In the targeted apartment, officers J. Tervor Reeves and Richard Welch found two packages of uncut cocaine, 42 foil packets of heroin and \$2,100, police said.

They also found four people, none of whom live in the area, and booked them on narcotics charges: Michael Mickens, 42, 2907 Foucher St.; Norman Newman, 25, 2200 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.; Leon Reaux, 24, 3603 Fourth St.; and John Wright, 40, 4618 Coliseum St.

All four have criminal records of various lengths. Only Mickens made his bail with three surety bonds totaling \$27,500, according to court records.

"Mickens' name 'is constantly coming up, then we get him, and two days later, he's back out there," Bardy said. "That's tough."

Bardy, who has spent a quarter-century investigating the narcotics trade in New Orleans, knew Mickens, who he said seemed to be reliving such raids over and over.

Bardy was reluctant to call Mickens a ring leader, but he is certain that Mickens is among the prominent middle men in many operations that narcotics investigators try to bust.