

2021



REFERENCE MANUAL **HISPANIC GANGS**

SYMBOLS, AND TATTOOS



(U) This reference book is a basic overview of signs, symbols, and tattoos used by some Hispanic Gangs present in the United States. This is not a complete list of gangs or symbols used by these gangs and should be used as a guide to enhance the understanding of gangs and not as the sole tool for gang validation.

(U) This product is a compilation of updated signs, symbols, and tattoos available to the NGIC and is strictly for intelligence purposes. State, local and federal law enforcement agencies are referenced in the acknowledgments.



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HISPANIC GANG DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY



(U) Gang definitions vary between states and even between federal agencies. The NGIC conforms to the US Department of Justice definition of gangs:

- (1) an association of three or more individuals;
- (2) whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity which they use to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation frequently by employing one or more of the following: a common name, slogan, identifying sign, symbol, tattoo or other physical marking, style or color of clothing, hairstyle, hand sign or graffiti
- (3) the association's purpose, in part, is to engage in criminal activity and the association uses violence or intimidation to further its criminal objectives
- (4) its members engage in criminal activity, or acts of juvenile delinquency that if committed by an adult would be crimes

<http://www.justice.gov/criminal-ocgs/about-violent-gangs>

**LATIN KING HANDSHAKE**

(5) with the intent to enhance or preserve the association's power, reputation, or economic resources

(6) the association may also possess some of the following characteristics: (a) the members employ rules for joining and operating within the association; (b) the members meet on a recurring basis; (c) the association provides physical protection of its members from other criminals and gangs; (d) the association seeks to exercise control over a particular location

(7) this definition is not intended to include traditional organized crime groups such as La Cosa Nostra, groups that fall within the Department's definition of "international organized crime," drug trafficking organizations or terrorist organizations



18th STREET GANG



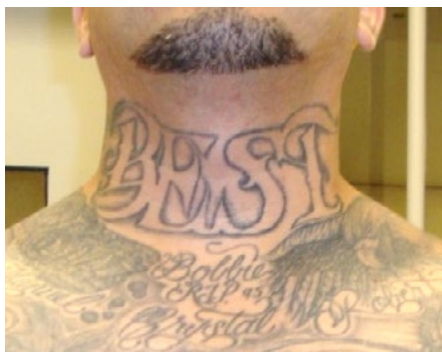


“Eighteen” “18”

(U//LES) The 18th Street Gang was formed in the 1960s by Mexican immigrants near 18th Street and Union Avenue in Los Angeles, California. Although the gang was formed by Mexican immigrants, membership is open to individuals of all ethnicities and nationalities. Members identify with variations of the number 18 including X8, XVIII, 8TEEN, and dieciocho (Spanish for 18).

(U//LES) Members also use 666 ($6+6+6=18$) and 3 horizontal bars with 3 dots (Aztec numbering for 18). BEST and B18ST, which stand for Barrio Eighteenth Street. 18th Street cliques use the traditional colors of blue and white.

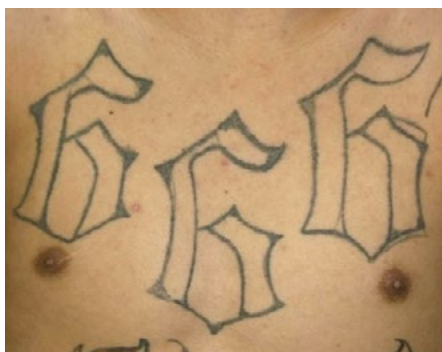
“ Although the gang was formed by Mexican immigrants, membership is open to individuals of all ethnicities and nationalities. ”



"BEST" (Barrio Eighteenth ST)



"XVIII"



"666"



"XV3 ST"



"XV3"



18th Street hand signs



"18" "SUR"



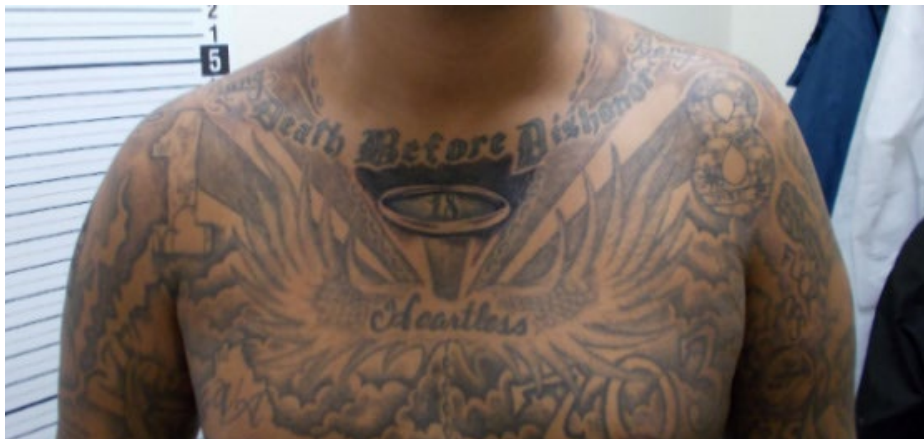
"18" "SUR"



"diesiocho" "18" "mi vida loca"



"18 St"



"18" on shoulders and middle of chest



18 in the spider



LATIN KINGS





Latin Kings

(U//LES) The Latin Kings were founded in the mid-1960's in the Humboldt Park region of Chicago, IL. The gang spread to New York and Connecticut in the 1980's through the prison system. The gang is also known as: Almighty Latin King Nation (ALKN), Almighty Latin King Queen Nation (ALKQN), Almighty Latin Charter Nation (ALCN), King Motherland Constitution (KMC; Chicago leadership) and Bloodline (New York faction).

(U//LES) Members identify with the colors black and gold, but may sometimes wear red and may wear professional sports merchandise from teams such as the LA Kings, Pittsburgh Penguins, and Pittsburgh Pirates. Markings consist of the 3- or 5-point crown, "LK", "ALKN", "ALKQN", a lion, a king, or the numbers 12 and 11 (L is the 12th letter and K is the 11th letter in the alphabet), 360 (360 degrees strong).

“The gang spread to New York and Connecticut in the 1980's through the prison system.”



"ALKN" on fingers; King and five-point crown on hand



Five-point star, ALKQN, 360



ADR (amor de rey) and fivepoint crown



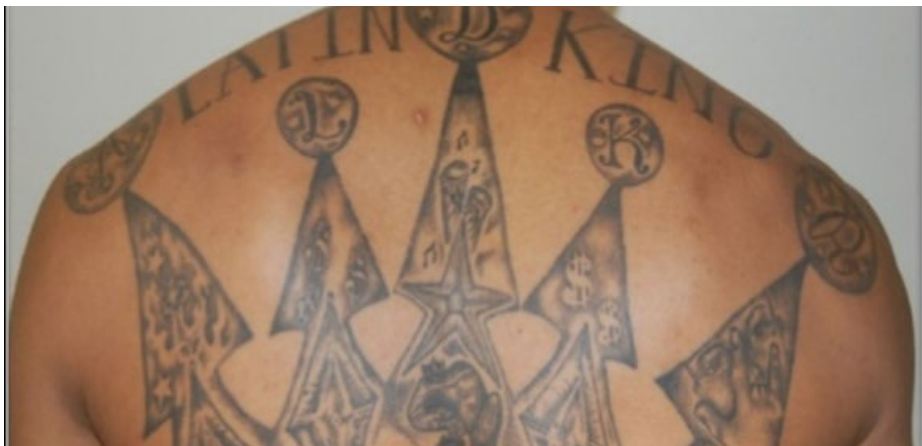
LK hand sign, king, LK and two fivepoint crowns



Lion with five-point crown and star



"Almighty Latin King Nation", lions, five-point crown, Puerto Rican flag



ADR, LK, Latin King, five-point crown, five-point star, LK hand sign



A king with 5-point crown and lions



Latin King hand sign



MARA SALVATRUCHA (MS-13)



**Mara Salvatrucha**

(U//LES) Mara Salvatrucha, commonly referred to as MS-13 or simply MS, is a transnational street gang that was established in Los Angeles, CA in the 1980s. The gang is established in the United States, and the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Most members are of Central American origin. MS-13 members associate with the color blue. Markings historically have included MS-13, MS, three or four letters representing the member's clique and the numbers 502, 503 or 504 representing the area codes of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras respectively.

**“Most members are of Central American origin.
MS-13 members associate with the color blue.”**

MS referring to Mara Salvatrucha





Smile Now, Cry Later



MS-13 motto “ver, oir, callar”
[see, hear, be quiet]



MS-13 hand sign referred as
“la garra” or pitchfork



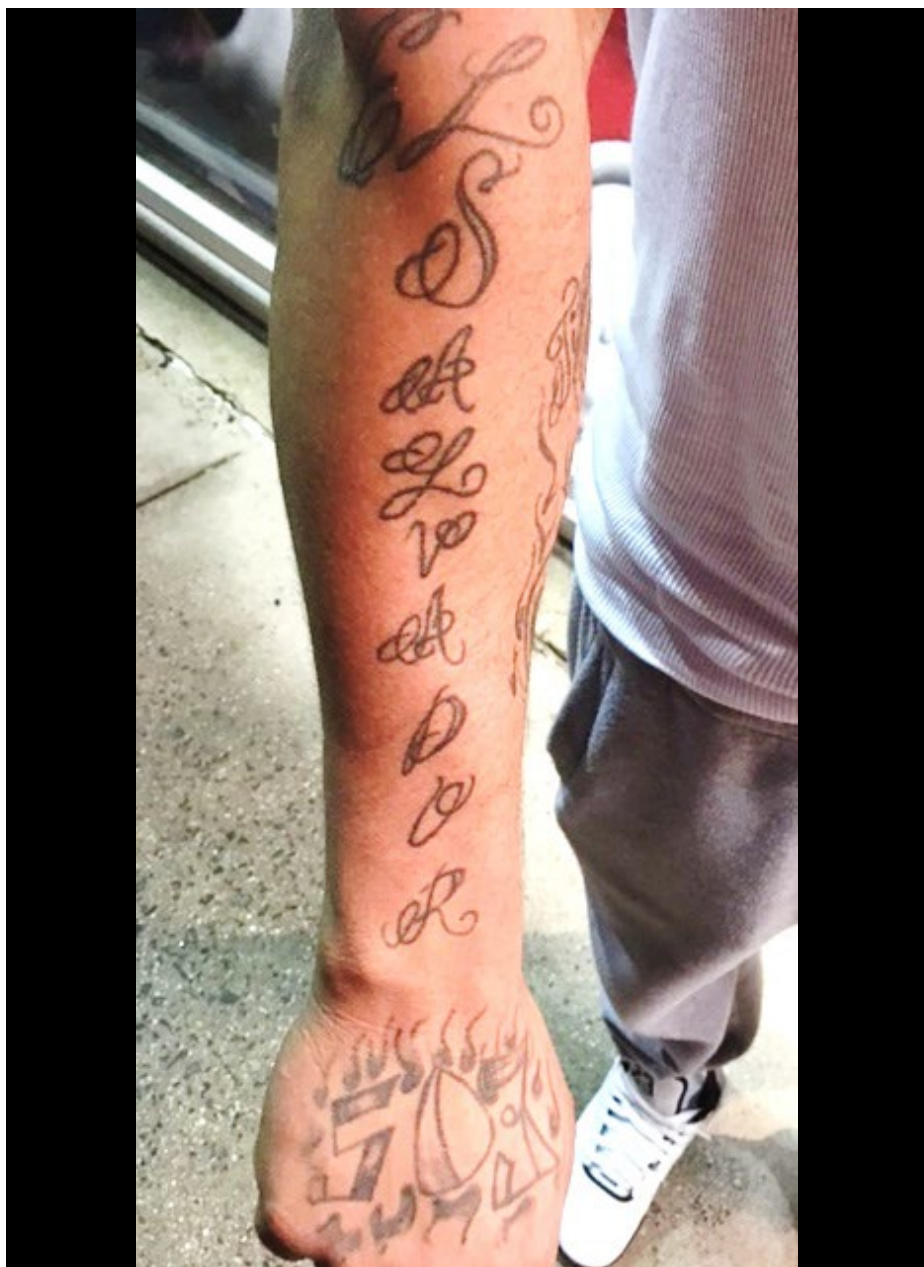
MS-13 hand sign referred as “la garra” or pitchfork



**“eme ese” “MS”
hidden by hair**



Reference to the Sailor's clique



“503” “El Salvador”





NORTEÑOS



**Huelga bird****"NS14"****NORTH STAR**

(U//LES) Norteño means Northerner or Northsider in English and refers to the group that follows or shows loyalty to La Nuestra Familia. The most common identifier is the number 14 and its variations, including X4, XIV, and the Mayan symbol for 14 (2 bars, 4 dots). Members also use the letter N or "ene" which is Spanish for N.

(U//LES) Other common identifiers include area codes, gang set names, Norte, the North Star, the Huelga Bird, 4 dots, and Aztec themes.

“The most common identifier is the number 14 and its variations, including X4, XIV, and the Mayan symbol for 14 (2 bars, 4 dots).”



N



"Norteno" with Huelga bird



"Northern warrior" with Huelga bird



One dot and four dots
representing 14 on hands



Huelga bird



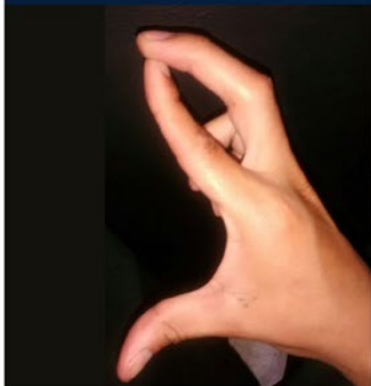
"XIV"



"Norte"



SUREÑOS





“South Side” “X3”

(U//LES) Sureño means Southerner or Southsider in English and refers to the group that follows or shows loyalty to the California Mexican Mafia (EME). The most common identifiers for the Sureños are the number 13 and its variations which include X3, XIII, the Mayan symbol for 13 (two bars, three dots), and “trece” (Spanish for 13).

(U//LES) Other common identifiers include area codes, gang set names, 3 dots representing “mi vida loca” (Spanish for my crazy life), the Aztec Warshield, and Huitzilpochtli, the Aztec War God.

“The most common identifiers for the Sureños are the number 13 and its variations which include X3, XIII.”



"South Side" "X3"



3 dots, "sureno"



"X3" 3 dots



“Sur trece” “F13” “mi vida loco”



Aztec symbolism



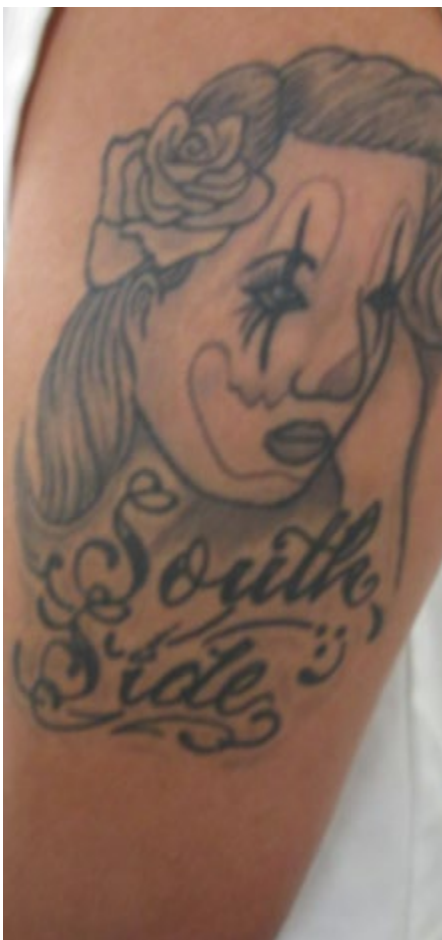
“South Side 13”



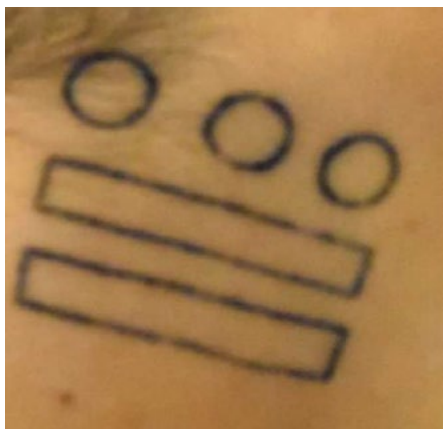
“13” “sureño”
one dot and three dots (13)



"sureño"



"south side" three dots,
woman with painted face



2 bars, 3 dots



Florencia 13 (sureños clique)



**BARRIO
AZTECA**





**“south side” three dots,
woman with painted face**

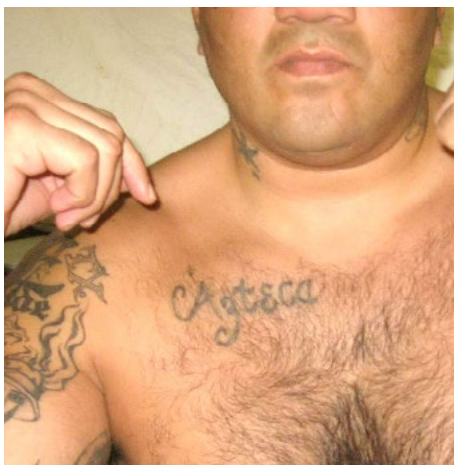


**“south side” three dots,
woman with painted face**

(U//LES) Barrio Azteca is a prison gang that began in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Most members are Mexican-American males. The gang does not have a specific tattoo, but they commonly use references to Aztec culture such as an Aztec Indian head or headdress and feathers (which are used to indicate rank within the gang).

(U//LES) Members also use the number 21 (B=2nd letter, A=1st letter of the alphabet) and its variations (XXII or Dos Uno) and the letters “BA”. The words “Azteca” and “Chuco” (a word used by BA to refer to El Paso) are other indicators of membership.

“Barrio Azteca is a prison gang that began in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Most members are Mexican-American males.”





LA NUESTRA FAMILIA





“Nuestra Familia” and sombrero with machete



Nuestra Familia symbol



“NF”

(U//LES) La Nuestra Familia (NF) was founded in the 1960s by a group of Hispanic inmates who were being oppressed by the California Mexican Mafia. NF is the parent organization of Norteños, therefore many NF members have Norteño related tattoos. These include the words North or Norte, “ene” (Spanish for N), variations of the number 14 (N is the 14th letter in the alphabet), and NF (La Nuestra Familia).

(U//LES) Symbols can also include the Huelga Bird, which symbolizes the United Farm Workers Association, Aztec themes, and a sombrero paired with a machete.

“NF is the parent organization of Norteños, therefore many NF members have Norteño related tattoos.”



MEXICAN MAFIA (La eMe)





Black hand with M

(U//LES) The Mexican Mafia (EME) prison gang was founded in the late 1950s as a predatory group of Hispanic inmates by Luis “Huero Buff” Flores of the Hawaiian Gardens gang at the Deuel Vocational Institution in Tracy, California. The EME is a loosely structured prison gang with a common culture and set of rules; consists of approximately 150+ members; and is divided into two factions – State and Federal. There is also an Arizona Mexican Mafia and Texas Mexican Mafia; however, both operate separately from the EME.

(U//LES) The EME controls over 100,000 Sureño gang members throughout the country, which is how the group derives most of its power and influence.

(U//LES) In addition, membership is for life and its members are predominately of Mexican-American descent. Most EME members historically acquired tattoos to identify themselves as EME, including distinctive tattoos of the letter “M” (or derivatives such as “EME” or “Emero”), and the black handprint with outstretched fingers (aka Mano Negra).

“In addition, membership is for life and its members are predominately of Mexican-American descent.”



"La EME"



Black hand with M



Aztec war shield



Black hand



"Azteca"





MEXIKANEMI (TEXAS MEXICAN MAFIA)





(U//LES) The Mexikanemi (EMI) prison gang was formed in the Texas department of Criminal Justice in the 1980s by San Antonio native Heriberto “Herb” Huerta. Huerta requested permission from the EME to use the name and form a separate gang. While he was granted permission, the two gangs operate separately from one another. The EMI also refer to themselves as “Mexikanemi,” meaning “Free-Mexican.” Members see themselves as soldiers of Aztlan, (Southwestern United States), which belonged to the Aztec Indians prior to the arrival of the Europeans.

(U//LES) EMI tattoos include the spelling out of “Mexikanemi;” the Mexican eagle in a feathered war shield with two crossed machetes; a burning sun; a Mexican mountain range; or images of Aztec culture and mythology (such as using the word “Aztlan” or Aztec pyramids).

(U//LES) Some affiliates will have tattoos reflecting the letter “M” (or derivatives such as the use of the number 13); however, this practice has been discouraged due to the symbols belonging to the EME and its Sureños.

“The EMI also refer to themselves as “Mexikanemi,” meaning “Free-Mexican.”

”





TANGO BLAST

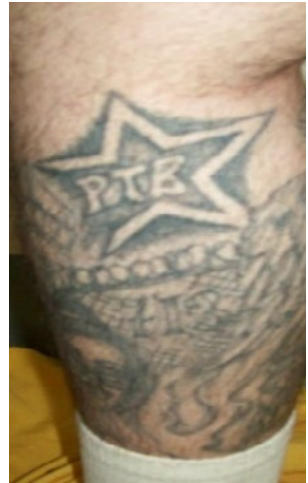




Tango Blast Houstone symbol

(U//LES) The Tango Blast adheres to many symbols (both in tattoo art and clothing) including the Houston Astros star, the Dallas Cowboys star, “TB,” and references to which chapter the member belongs to. Tango Blast consists of four citybased chapters comprised of inmates from their respective cities. The chapters were identified as “Houstone” or “H-Town” representing Houston; “ATX” or “La Capricha” representing Austin; “D-Town” representing Dallas; and “Foros” or “Foritos” representing Fort Worth.

(U//LES) Together, the chapters are referred to as the Four Horsemen, or “PTB” meaning Puro Tango Blast. Today, Tango cliques stretch across Texas and can be found in El Paso (aka “EPT”), San Antonio (aka “San Anto” or “Orejon”), Corpus Christi (aka “Corpitos”), West Texas (aka “WTX” or “Oeste”), and the Valley area (aka “Vallucos”).



“PTB”
(puro tango blast)

“Together, the chapters are referred to as the Four Horsemen, or “PTB” meaning Puro Tango Blast.”



Tango Blast Houstone symbol



PTB



"Tango Blast" with Dallas star



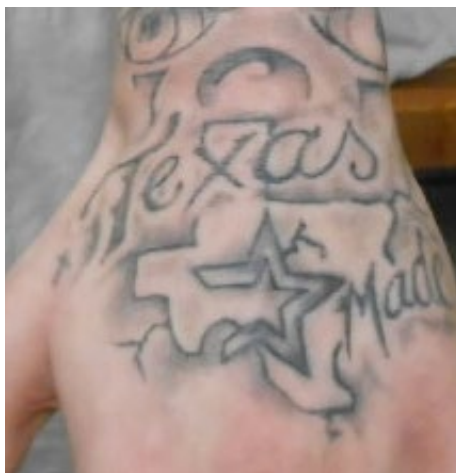
XX II (20 and 2 representing T and B)



D-town (Dallas)
with area code



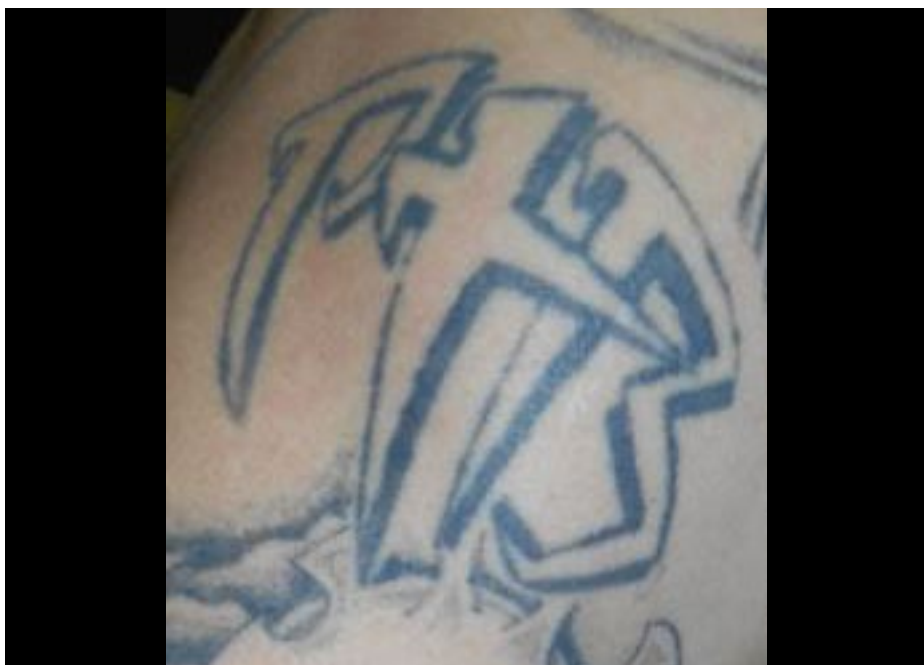
Dallas Cowboys star
with Dallas skyline



Texas made with Houston star



Area code in the shape of a star



"PTB"



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS





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- Florida Department of Corrections
- Kansas Department of Corrections
- Montgomery County Police Department, Maryland





NGIC online

The NGIC's Mission is to support law enforcement agencies with timely, accurate information sharing, and strategic/tactical analysis of federal, state, local, tribal, and correctional law enforcement information. NGIC focus is on the growth, migration, criminal activity, and association of gangs that pose a significant threat to communities throughout the United States.



LAW ENFORCEMENT ENTERPRISE PORTAL (LEEP)

All NGIC Online users are authenticated through LEEP. Once authenticated they will be directed to the LEEP Portal home page, which will allow them to click on the National Gang Intelligence Center link to arrive at the NGIC Online Home Page.

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NGIC Online is an information system composed of web-based tools designed for researching gang-related intelligence, and sharing information with the largest possible segment of the law enforcement community. The system encourages users to contribute new data, and solicit NGIC analytical assistance in the researching existing records, conduct gang threat assessments, and/or form liaisons with our network of national subject matter experts.

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