

Gang Culture:

STEVE:

Speaker 1: Do the gangs that reside in your area that you live in consist of males and females?

Speaker 2: They're all males but of course, you know, their girlfriends too are also affiliated. But never saw them because they were always hanging out with the girls.

Speaker 1: Whats the name of the gang that you were approached by?

Speaker 2: A lot of the main gangs are Florencia trece, morton town stoners, asvaln, ghettos boys, and then small crews like nsv, ek, mcp, and other small crews like that. All the younger kids where in the small crews like that.

Speaker 1: What signs like physical hand signs, clothing etc.. where evident in a gang that approached you?

Speaker 2: Well you can't see it but, but this is florencia trece. And umm... It's a lot different from the gangsters you see now that wear shirts that hang down to your knees and wear shorts below their knees. It was more like dickies shorts, socks that came up to your knees, bald head, white beater, and go tee. Straight up cholo.

Speaker 1: What was the race of the gang that you were approached by?

Speaker 2: In my neighborhood they were all Mexican.

Speaker 1: Where these people your friends or people you grew up with?

Speaker 2: A lot of them are friends and some are family.

Speaker 1: At what age were you approached by the gang?

Speaker 2: Range is between 8-10 years old.

Speaker 1: was a joining a gang normal as compared to your peers?

I never listened to their music and never knew what they were talking about.

Do you think that had any significance to whether or not you joined the gang? Do you think the hip hop culture and the things the rap culture promotes gang violence or glorifies gang culture?

Only to an extent just because, you know, its really up to the gangsters because the gangsters listen to it. So they look up to that and like oh yea I wanna be like that because you know, they see their parents who of course they are role models and they see their parents as cholo's and they think that that's what they want to be. And that they are listeing to rap and that's what I want to listen to. Im sure if they listen to heavy medal they would still

live the same lifestyle. Because they will be like that's what I wanna listen to . so its really up to the parents, and like they are really malleable.

Steve???

In the beginning it was male and then eventually girlfriends came along and yea, girls wanted to be involved wanted to be involved in gangs also.

What was the name of the gang you were approached by?

Jef rocks

Did you have gang signs? Hand signs, different types of clothing that was associated with the gang you were with?

As far as clothing no, we didn't have to wear any specific color clothing, or anything like that

Did you have hand signs?

Its pretty much like a J

Where these people your friends growing up?

Uhh, Some of them were but not all of them.

At what age were you approached by the gang?

I was 14 years old

Was the gang well known in your community?

In certain parts of the community, it was a small gang. We all lived in a certain area and that's how we developed our gang.

Where did you live in the time of your gang experience?

South central LA

What was the gangs reputation?

Well I wouldn't say good but, we weren't out there committing crimes, and were just out there to be in a gang to be supportive of each other you know? Like if someonbody had problems with other people, we make sure we back them up if anything happens. If anything comes down, were somebody doesn't like this guy and he gets jumped he knows the gang will be there to help him up. That's all that we did, it wasn't like organized crime or anthing like that.

How did being in a gang affect your family life?

Now or before?

Both.

Well before it didn't affect anything because my parents didn't know I was in a gang. Yea because I didn't have shaved head I didn't wear typical gangster clothes or anything like that.

SO, How about now, do they know?

I never told my parents they don't need to know about that.

What about the rest of your family?

My brother knew, but he was in a gang himself. In a gang that I actually didn't get along with too. He had his other friends and his friends were in a gang and I had my own friends and we were in a gang. And obviously around highschool people have parties and they get into a fight over stupid things like girl issues and that's how a lot of times were other times other gangs don't get along with another gang. All because like "you were trying to mess on my girl".

So over something small?

Yea, over something really stupid and petty. From my experience.

You had occasions where your gang and his gang came together and something happened?

No never got to a point where it was something that big. It was something that fizzled out itself and never blew up into anything. But a lot of times the fights start off with something simple like that.

How did being in a gang affect your school work attendance, and grades?

I don't think being in a gang really affected anything. Probably because of the fact that I had a kid young. That's what affected being in school for me. So, the gang didn't really do anything as far as driving me away from school. We never told each other we are going to ditch because we were in the gang. We just kinda did our own thing.

So did you have average grades, good grades, bad grades?

Uh.. In junior high I had decent grades. Yes.

Before you got into it?

Before I got into it my grades were still ok it was just the fact that I had a kid young that I had to quit school.

How many years of school did you complete?

10th grade only

How did you accept the offer to join the gang like initiation?

It got to a point and I was hanging out with them every day and eventually I said you know what? you guys have always backed me up and I kinda wanna show you guys my commitment that I am going to back you guys up so I told them I wanna join. They pretty much told me that I was going to get jumped. And there are different ways you can get jumped, you can either go one on one with some guy. And pick anyone you want and go one on one with him. Or you can get jumped anytime, anyplace, any day when they decide they wanna jump you. So I got jumped by 20 people. I was sore for at least three days. You get beat up but its not to the point where they are trying to kill you. You know what I mean? So when you get jumped in, people think that's its like aww man you are going to be hurt really bad. But really, they're are not there to kill you. They are there to give you a few licks here and there.

Are you satisfied or do you regret your decision to join the gang?

Being in a gang wasn't really like a big decision for me. It wasn't something were its like its was going to change my whole life you know? I mean, I knew getting in, like I said I was hanging out with them before. So I knew how the lifestyle was with being among that group or gang so there was no change what so ever.

What type of music did you listen to growing up?

Anything rap, it didn't matter it could be hip hop, it could be gangster rap, anything that has to do with just rap.

So, do you think that gangster rap promotes or influences peoples decision to join gangs?

Yea of course. They make it seem like its such a good lifestyle to be tough and carry guns and stuff like that. Back in the days when I was banging it never got to the point where we carried guns all the time. We had guns not a problem. We only took them out if we really had to use them. It wasn't like we had to carry guns all the time wherever we went. Because like I said we didn't look the part of typical gangsters you see in LA, you know? Typical asian gangs are doing normal everyday things just like everybody.

Where you involved in any extracurricular activities growing up besides the gang?

Before I got into the gang I skated a lot you know? I wanted to be soponsored and ride my skate board professionally at first. When I moved out here to LA from orange county that's when things just kind of took a big turn. You don't see people skate boarding in los angeles. Especially in south central. That's what made me feel like I was all alone

How active were your parents in your life? And citizens?

Like what do you mean by that. Like where they constantly around?

Well, that and you said that you never told them you were in a gang. So...

Yea, because of the looks of it from and in the front everything was ok. There was no warning signs. I didn't come home bruised up every night or stuff like that like I had been in fights.

So, would you say that they weren't very active since they didn't know quite a bit of what was going on in your life?

No I think I just hid it pretty well for them to see that side of me.

What was the race of the gang you were approached by?

We were all Pilipino, Asian. I have sticker burns on my hand that indicate that I am from Jef Rockswe always have it on our left hand side. So that tells a lot of people especially like in an Asian gang where you are from. A lot of times you get cigarette burns on your arms for a reason like if you had a friend die; it's a way to remember him. So every time you see that scar you know why that scar you know why that scar is there. I have 4 cigarette burns, 1 is for being in a gang, and the rest of them are from my friends dying.

B-NICE:

Did the gang consist of male or female members?

Both

The name of the gang that you were approached by?

The gang that I was approached is 151st Street Bumptin Pi-rus

What signs, physical hand signs or clothing were evident of the gang you were approached by?

Say that you throw up the OK sign, that's like the blood sign. And then we wear burgundy and red, or anything that got to do with red black, burgundy black, burgundy white, red and white. Just anything besides blue.

What was the race of the gang that you were approached by?

Blacks, African Americans.

Where these people your friends you grew up with??

Most of them were friends and family. Everybody kind of grew up together.

Are any of your family members in the same gang?

I would say from my oldest uncle to my youngest cousin are, we all are from the same gang. I have a lot of cousins most of them don't bang but the I mean a majority of them do, the males at least.

At what age were you approached by the gang?

Around like 14. Well I grew up there all my life and one day I got shot for hanging up with them and then after that day. That's when I got really put on after I healed from getting shot.

How was initiation?

Actually when I got shot they said ok well you took a bullet for the hood So you don't have to be put on. But, for me to get respect I got put on, which was a fight. It was me against three other people.

Ok. So what are the different ways you can get into a gang?

Was two ways you can get put on:

1. Unless you was like hangin with them or something happened to you and you get beat up for them or something.
2. Get put on by like somebody like close to you saying that you want you friend to put you on or if you have sex with anybody you get put on its usually a female that's kinda like weak way to go out. Majority of females would rather be beat up than have sex.

Are there any females in our gang?

Yes, umm a lot of females in our gang.

So did you get jumped?

I got jumped in.

How many people jumped you?

Three, they didn't beat me up guarantee.

Speaker 1 laughing.

I don't go down like that. I aint never got beat up

Was joining a gang normal compared to your peers?

I mean not really cause umm its like we all grew up together and you don't look at it as like being in a gang. Its like ok we kick it with these group of people which is our friends and family who we grew up with them. So it doesn't really seem like gang bangin. Its just that you don't like these people from across the way. Nah I mean certain regions, I mean color, I mean or just fights or whatever. You know what im saying. Majority of these be like family so you don't really look as it like gang bangin. Its like its my family over here that's going to take care of me. But I mean since so many of my family members from the neighborhood. I never thought of being in a gang. Its just this is my people this is where I belong.

Was your gang well known in your community?

Uumm yes.

And is it still well known in the community?

Yep.

Where did you live in the time of your gang experience?

In the hood, I was born and raised in Compton.

What was the gang's reputation?

Well ours was known for selling drugs mainly shrem.

How did the being in a gang affect your family life?

No difference. I mean, my mom told me like. Its really going about going to jail. like ok. don't go to jail be smart. But, I mean. I been to jail a few times nothing serious but I mean it never really affect the family that much. Cause half the family is from it who that's my age.

How did being in a gang affect your school work, attendance and grades?

It didn't affect my school work. I mean always went to school graduating got my high school diploma. Laughing... And most people don't, shit. I got my high school diploma so I mean it didn't affect my school in kind of way.

How many school years did you complete?

Duh, 12.

How did you accept the offer to join the gang?

They didn't never ask me because its my choice I kicked it with them. And I mean so, I was already labeled from them when other people see me so. "aren't you oh, from such and such?" Its like what the heck. But im really not but then kick it with them. So after I got shot for them then it was already it was already like they shot me because they thought I was from there. Then after that there wasn't no really asking. I just did it for myself.

How long have you been in a gang?

Now, probably about over like 5 years?

Are you satisfied about your decision?

I will never regret none of that dude. I never had no regrets because I am the man in the hood. Real shit. You don't say nothing to me I don't say nothing to you. It you mean if you try to bring the ra ra. Which means being the loud mouth. Talking all that. We goin to bring it. It never made me just

violent. I always been the regular person. You see me you probably don't tell I gang bang. You know what im saying. Except for all the tattoos. Other than that im normal. Don't you think??

What are some of the blow out words that you guys use?

Anything that's starts with a B or anything that starts with a C we use or change to B. like a cookie would be a bookie, coolaide would be boolaid. Sleep eventhough is starts with an s, still has the C style so we be like B. like sleep is style like a s style so we still say bleep. Bickin black being boo. Anything it got to do with a C we use as a B. So that was like umm... Su up would be like the call like like if im like with all my hommies, say we at a party or anywhere and we spread out. And I am su up then all the hommies be like turn they heads, and be like ok, so like somebody is callin us. Which one of the hommies is callin us? So I mean a pay attention call. I don't use the word Cousin because it sounds too much like Cuz. So I say my buzin or my relative. I mean my self esteem always be high. I didn't grow up in no poor ass house. Or nothing. I mean I done had everything I want in life. It wasn't like my I was broke, my mom was broke, my mom was on drugs. I got have both my parents. My mom and dad still together. I mean it was my decision. So all that bs talking about oh my mom smoke crack and my dad waiting there. That's all BS you do it because you wanna do it. I still got my grandma, I still got both my grandma's. I get whatever the hell I want. I get whatever the hell I want. I don't even have to work if I didn't want to. But, I chose to be in it because I wanted to. So all that stuff when yall people out there be like my mom is on crack and all that. That's BS you weren't to bein there. You have the choice to going to school do whatever you want. I still went to school graduated the whole nine. got whatever I want and still get whatever I want. It was my choice to gang bang. So all you people that's listening to this, don't give me that BS crap talking bout they made me they did this they did that. Nobody don't make you do nothing you don't wanna do.

Do you think your parents played a role in umm, you becoming apart of a gang?

Nah. Hell nah. My mom don't play that shit, or my dad. They didn't, I mean my dad already did back in the day. But, they told me, no what Im saying about the whole gang situation and sat me down about drugs, sex and the whole nine. But, once you walk out them doors it's a whole other world. You hang with your friends and then you you gona experiment everything for yourself. SO eventhough they told me not to all that stuff. I still did it anyways, it was my choice. SO now, all they can do is accept it. All they can do is tell me or pray for me, whatever. But, I'm grown they can't do, make me do nothing. They can't stop me from doing nothing. So anything I wanna do is me. I do it by myself. Nobody in my life make me do nothing. I do what I do when I want to. To tell the truth, you can never get rid of gangs. It ain't nothing but a repeat. Its gonna keep goin and goin and going. I don't care it's a gang or a clique or whatever. Its gonna keep on growing its never goin to stop, never goin to be an end to it. SO, therefore ain't no stopping a gang. Ain't no stopping nothing. All you can do is keep yourself busy, stay in the house, go to play basketball, do whatever. Do whatever, don't hang around anybody that have negative activities. I mean there is a good side to it and a bad side to it. I mean the good side to it is what people don't see. Like we all friends we all got love for eachother. And depending who you on who got love for you. But tell you thr truth everybody got love for you on the streets.