

March 25, 2022

VIA EXPRESS MAIL

Sheriff Alex Villanueva
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Hall of Justice, 8th Floor
211 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: **Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission Investigation**

Dear Sheriff:

In furtherance of the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission's ("Commission") goal of facilitating public transparency and accountability with respect to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department ("LASD"), I have been asked, pursuant to a Motion adopted unanimously by the Commission on November 18, 2021, to conduct a detailed investigation into the existence, operation and impact of deputy gangs, cliques or exclusionary subgroups within the LASD on the LASD and the community it serves. In connection with that responsibility a team of experienced lawyers has been assembled to undertake the investigation with me.

Because of my belief that you and we share common goals of ensuring effective and lawful policing so that the residents of Los Angeles County can have high confidence that the LASD and its deputies operate consistent with law, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss the investigation and to determine how you can assist to ensure the complete, accurate and prompt achievement of its goals.

Please let me know when you would be available for such a meeting.

Many thanks for your consideration. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,



Bert H. Deixler

cc: Bryan K. Williams
BWilliams@coc.lacounty.gov

May 6, 2022

VIA EXPRESS MAIL

Sheriff Alex Villanueva
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Hall of Justice, 8th Floor
211 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission Investigation

Dear Sheriff:

On March 25 I wrote you and explained that I, together with a team of experienced lawyers, have been asked, pursuant to a Motion adopted unanimously by the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission ("Commission"), to conduct a detailed investigation into the existence, operation and impact of deputy gangs, cliques or exclusionary subgroups within the LASD.

In my letter of March 25, I requested the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the investigation and the issues it would address. I have received no response to my letter.

On May 24, 2022, at Loyola Law School, in the Robinson Courtroom, the Commission will conduct an evidentiary hearing addressing certain information relating to the subjects described above. I anticipate that there will be testimony about Deputy subgroups known as the Banditos and the Executioners. In addition I expect that there will be testimony regarding the existence of a subgroup within the Men's Central Jail.

Please accept my invitation to the Commission hearing. It will commence at 9 a.m. at the date and location described. I would be delighted to work with your scheduler so that the Commission may have the maximum opportunity to accommodate your schedule.

Please confirm by the close of business May 16 that you will attend. I look forward to seeing you then.

Sincerely,



Bert H. Deixler

Kendall Brill & Kelly LLP

Sheriff Alex Villanueva

May 6, 2022

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CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

Address: 350 S. Figueroa St., Suite 288
Los Angeles, CA 90071
Phone: (213) 253-5678

SUBPOENA FOR PERSONAL APPEARANCE**BEFORE THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SHERIFF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**

THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION, TO (name, address, telephone number, and email address of witness, if known):

Sheriff Alex Villanueva

1. YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED, PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 25303.7 AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY CODE SECTION 3.79.190 (Measure R), TO PERSONALLY APPEAR AS A WITNESS before the Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission at the date, time, and place shown below.

a. Date: **July 1, 2022**

Time: **9:00 a.m.**

b. Address: Loyola Law School, Robinson Auditorium
919 Albany Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015

Note: Your oath or affirmation will be taken by a person authorized to administer oaths in the State of California. Your testimony will be taken on oral examination and video recorded.

2. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS SUBPOENA, INCLUDING THE DATE AND TIME SET FOR YOUR APPEARANCE OR HOW TO APPEAR VIRTUALLY, PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING PERSON BEFORE THE DATE AND TIME ON WHICH YOU ARE TO APPEAR:

- a. Name of subpoenaing parties: Chair of the Civilian Oversight Commission Sean Kennedy.
b. Telephone number: 213-253-5678 or 213-736-8302

3. **Witness Fees:** You are entitled to witness fees and mileage actually traveled both ways, as provided by law, if you request them at the time of service. You may request them before your scheduled appearance from the person name in item 2.

**DISOBEDIENCE OF THIS SUBPOENA MAY BE PUNISHED AS CONTEMPT BY A COURT.
YOU WILL ALSO BE LIABLE FOR THE SUM OF FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS AND
ALL DAMAGES RESULTING FROM YOUR FAILURE TO OBEY.**

Date issued: June 10, 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Kennedy", is written over a horizontal line.

Sean Kennedy
Chair of the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission
County of Los Angeles
State of California

PROOF OF SERVICE OF SUBPOENA FOR PERSONAL APPEARANCE

1. I served this Subpoena for Personal Appearance by personally delivering a copy to the person served as follows:
 - a. Person served (name):
 - b. Address where served:
 - c. Date of delivery:
 - d. Time of delivery
 - e. Witness fees (check one):
 - (1) ☐ were offered or demanded and paid. Amount\$ _____
 - (2) ☐ were not demanded or paid
 - f. Fee for service\$ _____
2. I received this subpoena for service on (date): _____
3. Person serving:
 - a. ☐ Not a registered California process server.
 - b. ☐ California sheriff or marshal.
 - c. ☐ Registered California process server.
 - d. ☐ Employee of independent contractor of a registered California process server
 - e. ☐ Exempt from registration under Business and Professions Code section 22350(b)
 - f. ☐ Registered professional photocopier
 - g. ☐ Exempt from registration under Business and Professions Code section 22451
 - h. Name, address, telephone number and, if applicable, county of registration and number

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: _____

(Signature)



← Jaime Juarea



1 THE WITNESS: It was a hodge road, the desert.

2 Q By MR. ROMERO: Were you socializing with
3 other deputies?

4 MR. BURKWITZ: Relevance.

5 THE COURT: Overruled.

6 THE WITNESS: We were -- not all were deputy. We
7 were training, firearms training.

8 Q BY MR. ROMERO: With members of other
9 departments?

10 A No. This was off duty.

11 Q Can you describe to me the image that's
12 depicted inside the two concentric circles on the flag
13 which you've testified that you purchased?

14 A Yes. It's a skeleton with a helmet holding a
15 rifle.

16 Q Is this consistent with the tattoo you have on
17 your body?

18 A It is.

19 Q Where do you have that tattoo on your body?

20 A My right calf area.

21 Q Would you please show it to the jury.

22 A Yes. (indicating.)

23 THE COURT: If jurors want to stand or come a
24 little closer, you can do that.

25 MR. ROMERO: Next slide.

26 Q Do you recognize what's depicted in this
27 photo?

28 A I do.

1 that captain or an acting captain can do an inquiry
2 themselves?

3 MR. ROMERO: Exceeds the scope.

4 THE COURT: Sustained.

5 Q By MR. BURKWITZ: Did you have an expectation
6 that Larry Waldie, if he had any issues, could do an
7 inquiry himself?

8 MR. ROMERO: Exceeds the scope.

9 THE COURT: Sustained.

10 MR. BURKWITZ: Nothing further.

11 THE COURT: Anything further?

12 MR. ROMERO: No, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: You may step down. Thank you.

14 Can we ask the witness just to wait outside
15 for just a minute.

16 Never mind. Let's move on.

17 Who is our next witness?

18 MR. ROMERO: Jaime Juarez, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: Common on forward, sir.

20 THE CLERK: Please state and spell your name for
21 the record.

22 THE WITNESS: Jaime, J-a-i-m-e; Juarez,
23 J-u-a-r-e-z.

24 THE CLERK: Do you solemnly state the testimony you
25 may give in the cause now pending before this court
26 shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
27 truth so help you God?

28 THE WITNESS: I do.

1 Q What was your next assignment?

2 A From there I promoted to detective. Went to
3 Pico Rivera sheriff's station.

4 Q How long were you assigned to Pico Rivera
5 station?

6 A Approximately three weeks.

7 Q Do you know why you were only transferred for
8 three weeks to Pico Rivera station?

9 MR. BURKWITZ: Objection. Relevance.

10 THE COURT: Overruled.

11 THE WITNESS: I believe it was over a civil claim.

12 Q By MR. ROMERO: So as a result of a civil
13 claim, which I won't get into, after three weeks you
14 were transferred to another station?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Do you know if -- strike that.

17 What was your next assignment?

18 A Cerritos station as a detective.

19 Q Is that where you're currently assigned?

20 A I am.

21 Q Can you refresh my recollection, what was the
22 date of your promotion to detective?

23 A July of last year 2022.

24 Q So a little less than a year?

25 A Yes.

26 Q Can you tell us in a nutshell -- could you
27 describe your responsibilities as a detective at a
28 patrol station such as Cerritos, very briefly?

1 Q Do you see the same skeleton logo depicted
2 three times in this photo?

3 A Four times.

4 Q Thank you. Is that the same logo you have
5 tattooed on your calf?

6 A It is.

7 Q And I'm sorry, that was page 3. Page 4 of the
8 same exhibit. Do you see the skeleton logo depicted in
9 this photo?

10 A I do.

11 Q Is that the same logo you have tattooed on
12 your body?

13 A It is.

14 Q Do you know where this photo was taken?

15 A I don't.

16 Q Going back one page. Do you know when -- do
17 you know where this photo was taken?

18 A I don't.

19 Q Did you ever see the logo displayed openly at
20 Compton station during the period of time you were
21 assigned there?

22 A Never.

23 Q How many other individuals have that same
24 tattoo that you have?

25 A So the tattoo actually has a number on it,
26 which 18 is my number. So I believe there's
27 40-something.

28 Q Are you notified every time someone gets that

1 tattoo?

2 A No.

3 Q When is the last time that you're aware of
4 that an L.A. county sheriff's deputy was able to put
5 that tattoo on their body?

6 A Three-and-a-half years ago.

7 Q And who was that deputy?

8 A Nicholas Baray.

9 Q Have you seen that tattoo on the bodies of
10 other L.A. county sheriff's deputies?

11 A I have.

12 Q Can you please -- and Take your time --
13 identify the individuals with whom you have firsthand
14 knowledge that they have that tattoo.

15 A Okay. So top of my head, Edwin Barajas.
16 Taylor Ingersoll, Omar Covarrubias. James Krase, that's
17 k-r-a-s-e. Ruben Jimenez, daniel Ruiz. Off the top of
18 my head, those individuals, sir.

19 Q How many -- strike that.

20 Can you please identify which of those
21 individuals for which you were present at the time they
22 had that tattoo applied to their bodies?

23 A For all of them.

24 Q Were these tattoos applied in a tattoo shop?

25 A No.

26 Q Were they applied at private homes?

27 A Yes.

28 Q With respect to the most recent one,

1 three-and-a-half years ago, were you present when the
2 tattoo was applied?

3 A I was.

4 Q Do you recall whose home that tattoo was
5 applied at?

6 A I believe it was Omar Covarrubias's home.

7 Q Who else was present when that tattoo was
8 applied at Omar Covarrubias's home?

9 A I don't -- Edwin Barajas was there. Taylor
10 Ingersoll. That's the only names I can think of right
11 now.

12 Q How many people were present at that event.

13 A It was only a handful of people, around five
14 or six.

15 Q Is there a voting process for determining who
16 gets to put that tattoo on their body?

17 A I wouldn't consider it a voting process, no.

18 Q What is the deliberative process for who gets
19 that tattoo?

20 A So the deputies that work patrol -- these are
21 the deputies that are assigned to patrol -- they would
22 roundtable, let's say if they see a deputy that's
23 working the field that, you know, is out there doing,
24 creating arrests, out there serving the public with
25 honor, respect, conducting ethical proactive police
26 work, that's a leader at the station, who mentors
27 younger deputies and treats both, you know, the public
28 and other department members with respect those are the

1 deputies that they would consider to be -- to offer them
2 the tattoo.

3 Q Who is they? Who are the "they" that consider
4 whether or not that deputy will get the tattoo?

5 A The deputies that have the tattoo that still
6 work Compton patrol.

7 Q Is that voting done in person or via phone?

8 MR. BURKWITZ: Lacks foundation as phrased.

9 THE COURT: Overruled.

10 THE WITNESS: The one that I'm aware of were in
11 person.

12 Q BY MR. ROMERO: And how many -- for example,
13 the last -- strike that.

14 What was the last voting meeting that you
15 attended?

16 A It wasn't a meeting, but it was during lunch
17 or something. It was Taylor Ingersoll. That was
18 approximately four years ago.

19 Q How many deputies were present?

20 A Four, I believe.

21 Q Were there other deputies that voted by proxy,
22 meaning that they communicated their vote to someone
23 else for that process?

24 A No.

25 Q Who were the four individuals that voted on
26 Taylor Ingersoll getting his tattoo?

27 A I don't recall who was there, sir.

28 Q You were there; correct?



LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF ALEX VILLANUEVA ANNOUNCES A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY ON DEPUTY CLIQUES/SUBGROUPS ENGAGING IN MISCONDUCT

On August 13, 2020, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva announces 26 department employees will receive letters of intent to suspend or terminate as a result of their involvement in a fight between deputies that occurred in September of 2018 at Kennedy Hall in East Los Angeles. Following that incident, allegations arose about a deputy clique within the Department at the East Los Angeles patrol station of a subgroup known as the "Bandidos."

Sheriff Villanueva re-emphasized his zero-tolerance stance on this very important issue for both the Department and the community. For the first time in the Department's history and at the direction of Sheriff Alex Villanueva, LASD has implemented a policy that addresses misconduct by cliques and subgroups, allowing the Department to take administrative action against employees who engage in this type of behavior.

LASD Chief Matthew Burson, who oversees Professional Standards Division, announced the Department's newly enacted deputy clique policy that holds deputies to a higher standard as it relates to misconduct by deputy cliques and/or subgroups. Chief Burson explained that if a deputy violated department policy the corrective actions will range from suspensions to termination of employment.

Finally, Commander April Tardy, who oversees LASD's Central Patrol Division, outlined the administrative investigation process and how these numerous investigations are also reviewed by outside agencies including the District Attorney's Office and the Office of Inspector General.

Sheriff Villanueva said, "After 20 months in office, we have taken the legal and procedural steps necessary to ensure that we are holding our employees accountable to the rule of law, as I will not tolerate any group of employees who mistreats any member of the community or another member of the Department."

Sheriff Villanueva Announces A Zero Tolerance Policy On ...



If you have concerns regarding the above, share your voice. You may contact your Board of Supervisors at the below:

County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

Hilda L. Solis

Supervisor, First District

Phone: (213) 974-4111

FirstDistrict@bos.lacounty.gov [mailto:FirstDistrict@bos.lacounty.gov]

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Not sure who is your Supervisor? Click Link to Find Out: <http://bos.lacounty.gov/About-Us/Board-of-Supervisors>
[<http://bos.lacounty.gov/About-Us/Board-of-Supervisors>]

SIB Staff

ALL STORIES BY: SIB STAFF

Cal. Pen. Code § 13670



Current through the 2022 Legislative Session

Section 13670 - Law enforcement gangs prohibited**(a)** For purposes of this section:**(1)** "Law enforcement agency" means any department or agency of the state or any local government, special district, or other political subdivision thereof, that employs any peace officer, as described in Section 830.**(2)** "Law enforcement gang" means a group of peace officers within a law enforcement agency who may identify themselves by a name and may be associated with an identifying symbol, including, but not limited to, matching tattoos, and who engage in a pattern of on-duty behavior that intentionally violates the law or fundamental principles of professional policing, including, but not limited to, excluding, harassing, or discriminating against any individual based on a protected category under federal or state antidiscrimination laws, engaging in or promoting conduct that violates the rights of other employees or members of the public, violating agency policy, the persistent practice of unlawful detention or use of excessive force in circumstances where it is known to be unjustified, falsifying police reports, fabricating or destroying evidence, targeting persons for enforcement based solely on protected characteristics of those persons, theft, unauthorized use of alcohol or drugs on duty, unlawful or unauthorized protection of other members from disciplinary actions, and retaliation against other officers who threaten or interfere with the activities of the group.**(b)** Each law enforcement agency shall maintain a policy that prohibits participation in a law enforcement gang and that makes violation of that policy grounds for termination. **A law enforcement agency shall cooperate in any investigation into these gangs by an inspector general, the Attorney General, or any other authorized agency.**

Notwithstanding any other law, local agencies may impose greater restrictions on membership and participation in law enforcement gangs, including for discipline and termination purposes.**(c)** Except as specifically prohibited by law, a law enforcement agency shall disclose the termination of a peace officer for participation in a law enforcement gang to another law enforcement agency conducting a preemployment background investigation of that former peace officer.

Ca. Pen. Code § 13670

Added by Stats 2021 ch 408 (AB 958), s 2, eff. 1/1/2022.

Case Activity Log
File # 918-00055-2003-441

Date	Time	Activity
09/28/18	1445	Briefed regarding the incident, and responding to Whittier Presbyterian Hospital to interview Deputy Art Hernandez. Contacted field Sergeant [REDACTED] who was transporting him to the hospital. Deputy Hernandez was treated for his injuries, and he was ordered back home.
09/28/18	1703	Interviewed Deputy Art Hernandez declined to be interviewed and requested an attorney prior to giving a statement. Art provided me his clothing (shirt, pants, shoes) that he wore on the night of the incident which had blood on them. He also signed consent for me to access his medical file for this incident. He also provided his copy of his medical discharge. Also I obtained a copy of the incident report.
09/28/18	1841	Interviewed Deputy [REDACTED] regarding the incident.
09/28/18	1912	Deputy [REDACTED] declined to be interviewed and requested an attorney prior to giving a statement.
09/28/18	1924	Deputy [REDACTED] declined to be interviewed and requested an attorney prior to giving a statement.
09/28/18	2003	Deputy [REDACTED] declined to be interviewed and requested an attorney prior to giving a statement.
09/28/18	2024	Deputy [REDACTED] declined to be interviewed and requested an attorney prior to giving a statement.
09/28/18	2036	Deputy [REDACTED] declined to be interviewed and requested an attorney prior to giving a statement.
09/28/18	2115	Went to 451 S. Atlantic Ave "Kennedy Hall" saw no video cameras on the property. I saw car dealership across the street [REDACTED] could not find cameras. Saw taco truck [REDACTED] spoke to [REDACTED] and he told us that another taco truck named [REDACTED] was serving taco at the location on the night of the incident. He provided the location [REDACTED] We went to the location and contacted the owner [REDACTED] and he did not see the incident. He also had video cameras on truck but there was no video footage due to hardware problems.
09/28/18	0200	Booked evidence
09/30/18	0916	Sgt. Kim and I tried to interview [REDACTED] but he declined and requested an attorney prior to giving a statement.
09/30/18	1000	Sgt. Kim and I [REDACTED] attempted to locate witnesses in the back alley. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] saw nothing nor did she hear anything. Contacted [REDACTED] saw nothing or heard nothing.

		<p>Contacted [REDACTED] [REDACTED] she heard music and saw a blue tarp around fence line. [REDACTED] heard music, heard laughter, saw blue tarp around the fence line. I also saw a small video camera underneath the roof overhang and Per. [REDACTED] it was not operational. A female passerby assisted in translation.</p> <p>Sgt. Kim contacted a transient in the alley [REDACTED] [REDACTED] saw nothing or heard nothing. [REDACTED]</p>
09/30/18	1313	Sgt. Kim and I tried to interview [REDACTED] but he declined to be interviewed and he wanted an attorney prior to giving a statement.
09/30/18	1349	Sgt. Kim and I tried to interview [REDACTED] floor interview room. He wanted an attorney prior to giving a statement.
10/01/18	1048	Contacted [REDACTED] manager of Kennedy Hall.
10/01/18	1200	Principle [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated there was no video cameras at the back end of the school [REDACTED]
10/02/18	1200	Met [REDACTED] at Kennedy Hall, took photographs of location, obtained rental agreement, canvased the area for cameras
10/02/18	1425	Interviewed [REDACTED]
10/02/18	1553	Interviewed [REDACTED]
10/03/18	1454	Attempted to call owner [REDACTED]
10/03/18	1500	Saw one business CCTV Cameras [REDACTED] [REDACTED] owner and will meet me on 10/05/18 @ 1700 hours at his business.
10/03/18	1530	Contacted Attorney Maureen
10/04/18	1429	Sgt. Kim, Sgt. Velasquez, Sgt. Choi and I went to AL ADS to interview the following Deputies: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
10/05/18	0900	Also went to ELA and met with [REDACTED] and obtained video footage [REDACTED] Sent Tech crew out to obtain video footage. Also obtained cell phones for targets [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
10/05/18	1600	Contacted [REDACTED] who owns property [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Reviewed video footage and saw nothing with evidentiary value.
10/05/18	1700	Sgt. Choi met with owner [REDACTED] obtained video. Also sent Preservation letters for phone records.
10/08/18	1142	Called Deputy [REDACTED] [REDACTED] She wanted to an attorney present for the interview. Advised her to have her attorney contact me for an interview.
10/18/18	1300	Picked up radio traffic at SCC.
10/18/18	1621	Met with Deputy [REDACTED] and he gave a statement. 1535 hours, I received a phone call from Attorney

		Mitch Cander who representing Deputy ██████████ who agreed to give a statement on October 23, 2018 ██████████
10/23/18	1218	Mich Cander called and cancelled meeting due to scheduling conflict ██████████
10/24/18	1000	Sgt. Choi and I went to Dep. ██████████ father's house ██████████ left business card.
10/24/18	1029	Sgt. Choi and I went to Dep. ██████████ spoke to him and gave him a business card. He agreed to talk but wanted an attorney present. Told him to contact ALADS and retain an attorney.
10/24/18	1147	Dep. ██████████ called and I spoke to her and she agreed to talk to me but wanted an attorney present. She would call ALADS for an attorney.
10/24/18	1347	Called Attorney Bill Hayden 310-650-1737 to re-interview ██████████ on 11/01/18 at 1100 hours at ALADS re video and if he knows of anybody who saw him get kicked in the head.
10/25/18	1000	Went to ELA Dep. ██████████ residence in ██████████ contacted his uncle ██████████ at the location provided ██████████ cell phone number, called ██████████ and agreed to meet him at 1400 hours at his house in arcadia.
10/25/16	1400	Sgt. Choi and I went to Dep. ██████████ residence and did an interview.
	2030	Attorney (Sherry Lawrence) for ██████████ called me and we spoke.
10/26/18	0900	Sgt. Choi and I went to ██████████ Left a business card to call me back.
	1021	Interviewed ██████████ at ELA captain's conference room.
	1047	Interviewed ██████████ at ELA captain's conference room.
	1108	Interviewed LET ██████████ at ELA captain's conference room.
	1200	Sgt. Choi and I went to ██████████ left business card to call me back.
	1230	Sgt. Choi and I went to ██████████ residence in the ██████████ left business card to call me back.
	1238	Dep. ██████████ called me and agreed to meet us on Tuesday 10/30/18 @1400 hours at ELA Station.
	1300	Sgt. Choi and I went to ██████████ residence in the city of ██████████ left business card to call me back.
	1500	Attorney Bill Haden called and changed location to re-interview ██████████
	2000	Sgt. Choi and I went to ██████████ and contacted the security manager ██████████ about the video ██████████ said he will call me back.
10/29/18	1030	Sgt. Bell and I contacted ██████████ at his residence, he agreed to speak with us but he wanted a lawyer present. Provided him a business card within five days wanted him to call me back.
	1054	Sgt. Bell and I contacted Dep. ██████████ at his residence and did an interview with him.
	1200	Sgt. Bell and I interviewed ██████████ at his residence.
	1225	Sgt. Bell and I went to Dep. ██████████ residence contacted ██████████ and he did not reside there. Called him on his cell phone ██████████ and left a message.

	1330	Sgt. Bell and I met with Dep. [REDACTED] at his residence, and he wanted an attorney before talking with us. Provided business card.
	1400	[REDACTED] called me on my cell phone and conducted a phone interview. He told me that he was not even there at the off training party.
	1800	Spoke to Attorney Sherry Lawrence [REDACTED] and he will speak to us at IAB with an attorney.
10/31/18	1300	Finalized interviews with [REDACTED] for 11/1/18. Also researched who [REDACTED] talked about and it was
11/01/18	1100	Re-interviewed [REDACTED] at IAB showed him video of the sidewalk.
	1400	Interviewed [REDACTED] at IAB
11/02/18	0926	Dep. [REDACTED] called me, and she requested a lawyer present before the interview. Also dropped off video with High Tech to see if they enhance the video footage and obtain stills. Investigator was Det. Steven Keen.
	1330	Interview [REDACTED] at Cerritos Community College
11/06/18	0900	Sgt. Morris and I interviewed [REDACTED] at his residence in Fontana
	1400	Sgt. Morris and I interviewed [REDACTED] at IA.
	1530	Confirmed meeting with Sherry Lawrence [REDACTED] for 11/15/18 at 1200 hours (ICIB).
11/08/18	1753	Received phone call for [REDACTED] who waived attorney and agreed to meet at ICIB on 11/13/18 @1500 hours.
11/09/18	1530	[REDACTED] had search warrants approved for [REDACTED] Faxed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Also Lt. Chevalier advised me OIG wanted additional questions about subcultures at East LA. Captain Burson confirmed additional questions needed to be asked.
11/12/18	0947	Received information for [REDACTED] cell phone.
11/12/18	1038	Contacted [REDACTED] advised her might have to cancel due to Malibu fires.
11/13/18	1030	Sent text [REDACTED] that the interview was still on at 1500 hours at ICIB, and she confirmed.
11/13/18		Sent [REDACTED] cell return to Crime Analyst provided spread sheet. She communicated to [REDACTED] see spread sheet for details.
11/13/18	1450	Called High Tech Crew delayed re fires for enhancing the video.
11/13/18	1610	Interviewed [REDACTED] at ICIB with Sgt. M. Ramirez.
11/14/18	1000	Sgt. Bell and I did door knocks on the following deputies residences: [REDACTED]
11/14/18	1522	Sgt. Edgars and Takishima interviewed the following individuals [REDACTED] Audio's are placed in the shared files. Unable to contact [REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL

11/14/18	1605	Sent emails to the above individuals.
11/14/18	1646	Also sent [REDACTED] fax of the search warrant.
11/14/18	1703	Deputy [REDACTED] called me and advised he did not attend the off training party. He will do a follow up email as well.
11/16/18		Received email [REDACTED] placed them into a fold.
11/19/18	1454	Deputy [REDACTED] declined to be interviewed via email.
11/19/18	1457	Deputy [REDACTED] declined to be interviewed via email.
11/19/18	1557	Deputy [REDACTED] declined to be interviewed via email.
11/26/18		Confirmed appointments for [REDACTED]
11/27/18	1300	Cancelled interviews due to Captain/Chief Burson. He wanted to make sure I did not have to ask questions about subcultures groups at ELA Station. Worked on Sgt. Wolanski case due to statue date is coming up.
12/07/18	0900	Received the go ahead to start interviewing witnesses for this case. Also the chief Burson informed me that I do not need to ask about subculture groups at ELA Station. Spoke to Attorney Sherry Lawrence representing [REDACTED] and declined to be interview.
12/14/18	1100	Sent delayed notifications to Deputy [REDACTED] via county email. At 1800 received phone call and email from Mitch Kander asking for a copy of the search warrant. I advised him he was ongoing criminal investigation.
12/17/18	0950	[REDACTED] residence and contacted mother. Mother called her and I spoke to her. She agreed to meet with us Wednesday at 1300 hours at ELA Station.
12/17/18	1100	Sgt. Carey and I did door knocks on the following deputies: [REDACTED]
		Dep. [REDACTED] lawyer called and will speak to his client, [REDACTED] is represented by Russel and agreed to meet later in the month.
12/18/18	0941	Received email from [REDACTED] and he will be represented by an attorney.
12/18/18	0942	Sent email to Deputy [REDACTED] asking for an interview.
12/18/18	1100	Received email from [REDACTED] and declined to be interviewed.
12/19/18	1043	Sent Attorney Kander first four pages of search warrant [REDACTED]
12/19/18	1433	Interviewed Deputy [REDACTED] on the phone.
01/07/19	1000	Attorney Russ Perry cancelled [REDACTED] because she was IOD. He will reschedule with her later. Also he ascertained which attorney was representing [REDACTED] and it was Maureen Okwuosa.
01/07/19	1322	Left message for Deputy [REDACTED] for him to call me back.
	1356	Deputy [REDACTED] called back, and he was represented by the Elizabeth Gibbons Law firm and provided with the paralegal name [REDACTED]
	1357	Called [REDACTED] and she will call me back re interview of [REDACTED]
	1427	Conducted phone interview with [REDACTED] and declined

01/08/19	1600
01/09/19	1000
	1323
	1337
	1406
01/10/19	0930
01/10/19	1052
01/10/19	1214
01/10/19	1302
01/10/19	1503
01/10/19	1606
01/10/19	2314
01/11/19	1000
01/11/19	1322
01/11/19	1441
01/13/19	1203
01/14/19	1533
01/14/19	1600
01/15/19	1123
01/16/19	0712
01/17/19	1500
01/18/19	0844
01/18/19	0727
01/22/19	1500
01/23/19	0900
01/23/19	1141

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01/23/19	1246
01/23/19	1251
01/25/19	2146
01/28/19	1022
01/31/19	1421
02/05/19	1625
02/07/19	1123
02/26/19	1025
02/26/19	1135
02/27/19	0847
03/02/19	1415
03/12/19	1108
03/15/19	1535
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03/21/19	0830
	1053
	1057
	1421
	1530

CONFIDENTIAL

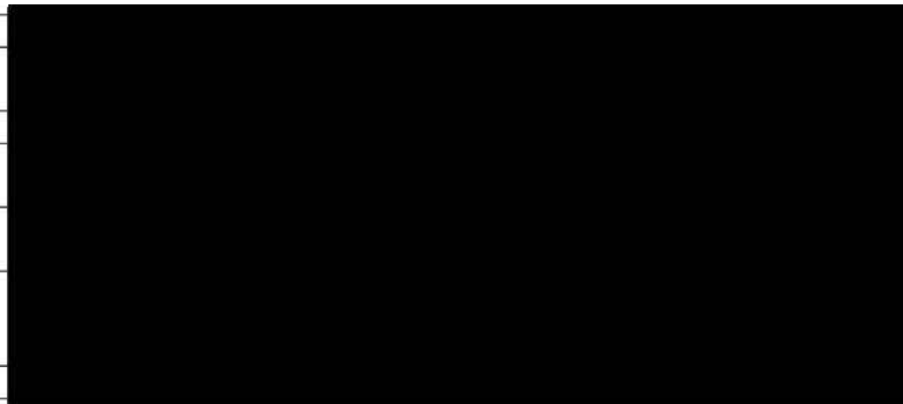
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03/29/19	1508
04/01/19	1350
04/03/19	1400
04/18/19	1610
04/30/19	1545
05/01/19	1435
05/03/19	1730
05/03/19	1826
05/03/19	1847
05/04/19	1628
05/04/19	1918
05/06/19	1608
05/07/19	0946
05/29/19	1300
05/29/19	1527
	1723
06/04/19	1400
06/04/19	1526
06/06/19	1618
06/14/19	1142
06/18/19	1545

CONFIDENTIAL

06/18/19	1728
06/19/19	1000
06/21/19	1618
06/24/19	1042
06/27/19	1543
07/02/19	1001
07/02/19	1015
	1043
	1105
07/03/19	1005
07/03/19	1304
07/09/19	1300
	1324
	1400
	1456
	1445
07/12/19	1539
07/15/19	1335
07/20/19	1525
07/23/19	1100
07/24/19	1037
09/12/19	1700

CONFIDENTIAL

09/25/19	1200
12/10/19	1330
12/10/19	1530
01/21/20	1000
02/20/20	0600
02/25/20	1030



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3-01/050.83 - Employee Groups which Violate Rights of Other Employees or Members of the Public

[< 3-01/050.80 - Grooming and Dress Standards](#)[3-01/050.84 - Fraternalization and Prohibited Associations >](#)

Department personnel shall not participate or join in any group of Department employees which promotes conduct that violates the rights of other employees or members of the public.

Participation in these illicit groups, herein referred to as “deputy cliques” or “subgroups” which often include an associated symbol and/or tattoo, harms morale and erodes public trust. These groups undermine the Department’s goals and can create a negative public perception of the Department, increasing the risk of civil liability to the Department and involved personnel.

Any employee engaging in misconduct of any kind, including but not limited to, the use of excessive force or mistreating or harassing others, will be subject to discipline. If the misconduct involves criminal allegations, the matter may be referred to the District Attorney’s Office for possible prosecution.

All personnel will be held accountable for this policy. Failure to adhere to this policy may subject violators to discipline under the MPP, including sections 3-01/030.05, General Behavior, 3-01/030.73, Hazing, and 3-01/050.10, Performance to Standards.



CALIFORNIA

L.A. County sheriff has legal power to ban gang-like groups of deputies, county lawyers say



Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva speaks at a news conference in late May. (Al Seib/Los Angeles Times)

BY ALENE TCHEKMEDYIAN | STAFF WRITER

SEPT. 16, 2021 1:34 PM PT

Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva has broad legal authority to crack down on [entrenched, gang-like groups](#) of deputies that have been accused of glorifying violence and whose members have cost taxpayers [tens of millions of dollars in legal payouts](#), according to attorneys for the county.

The [confidential legal opinion](#) issued last month by the Office of County Counsel knocks down claims by Villanueva that he is limited in what he can do to combat the problem and that an attempt to prohibit deputies from joining the groups would violate their constitutional rights. A copy of the memo was obtained by The Times.

Read the County Counsel's 2021 opinion on regulating gang-like groups of deputies

Sept. 16, 2021

“The County’s compelling interest in restoring or increasing public trust in the LASD and preventing the harm subgroups cause to the County, LASD, and community members justifies a policy that bans participation in subgroups,” county attorneys wrote in the memo to the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, an independent watchdog group.

The lawyers’ clear-cut stance comes amid [heightened scrutiny](#) of the groups, which have plagued the department for decades, as elected officials and community groups increasingly have pressured Villanueva to deal with them decisively. State legislators have passed a bill that would ban “law enforcement gangs” in all law enforcement agencies, while county officials have [clashed](#) with the sheriff over what they say are his insufficient efforts.

Since taking office at the end of 2018, Villanueva has said that trying to determine which of the department’s 10,000 deputies belong to one of the many groups would amount to “an inquisition.”

“That would be inappropriate and wildly speculative,” the sheriff said last year. “We’re trying to run an organization, not engage in a witch hunt.”



CALIFORNIA

FBI investigating tattooed deputy gangs in Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

To justify his stance, Villanueva has referred to legal direction the County Counsel Office gave sheriff's officials in 2014, saying lawyers concluded that banning the [graphic, matching tattoos](#) that group members often got or forbidding deputies from associating with a particular organization would violate their free speech rights.

A copy of the 2014 legal opinion obtained by The Times showed it was less expansive than Villanueva's portrayal and narrowly addressed just one issue: whether a proposed policy banning certain kinds of tattoos would pass constitutional muster.

Read the County Counsel's 2014 opinion on regulating deputies' tattoos

Sept. 16, 2021

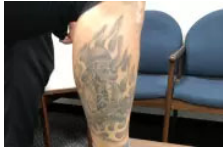
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Attorneys at the time determined such a policy was unlikely to hold up under a legal challenge because tattoos are considered a form of free speech, and inspecting deputies' bodies for tattoos would violate their rights as well. Lawyers recommended instead that the department simply direct employees to cover their tattoos while on duty.

Department policy requires deputies to cover their tattoos, though it's unclear when that rule went into effect.

In the recent memo, county lawyers advised the commission that the sheriff had the legal authority to put an end to the gang-like clubs.



CALIFORNIA

Rep. Waters seeks federal probe of L.A. County deputies' alleged Executioners gang

July 21, 2021

“Because a ban on subgroups is connected to employees’ conduct in their capacity as LASD personnel, not as private citizens, it likely does not implicate the First Amendment,” the memo said. “Subgroups do not exist separate and apart from LASD employment. They are defined based on LASD stations, bureaus, or units, and their activities are intertwined with law enforcement functions.”

The legal opinion was written in response to a request from the commission in May for county attorneys to weigh in on its proposal that the Sheriff’s Department fully ban employees from participating in, joining or soliciting others to join the illicit groups. The commission’s authority over the Sheriff’s Department is limited, and Villanueva is not required to adopt its recommendations.

Villanueva did not respond to questions from The Times. A Sheriff’s Department spokesman did on his behalf, saying the agency disagrees with the new legal opinion and believes the far-reaching policy proposed by the commission would be unconstitutional.

Capt. John Satterfield said the county lawyers’ recent opinion was broad and did not address questions about “policy language, enforcement, discovery, search, photographs, discipline, investigation, invasion of privacy, clothing removal for visual inspection.”



CALIFORNIA

Sheriff Villanueva fights subpoena for his testimony on deputy cliques

March 23, 2021

He added: “Recently county counsel opinions have lost credibility, as they have been caught contorting to support politically motivated actions by the Board of Supervisors and their appointees, rather than informing elected officials with honest interpretations of statutory and case law.”

In the past, Villanueva has denied that “gangs” exist within the department and has downplayed the issue, saying problems associated with the groups are instead often the result of drunken deputies getting into fights.

“If you look at the majority of them, that is what it has been,” he told the Civilian Oversight Commission last year. “All these things are people getting into fights, and it is actually internal, not external to the community.”

But the sheriff has also taken credit for addressing the problem with a policy that prohibits deputies from joining groups that promote behavior that violates the rights of others. And in May Villanueva said he had broken up the Banditos, a group of deputies assigned to the department’s East L.A. station, with [disciplinary actions](#) and by reassigning alleged members to other stations — a claim some sheriff’s officials and others [dispute](#).

Villanueva has said he supports legislation brought by Assemblyman Mike Gipson (D-Carson) that would require police agencies to have a policy prohibiting officers from participating in “a law enforcement gang,” which the bill defines as a group of officers who engage in a pattern of rogue behavior on duty that “violates the law or fundamental principles of professional policing.” Violating these policies would be grounds for termination under the proposed law.



CALIFORNIA

L.A. County deputy alleges ‘Executioner’ gang dominates Compton sheriff station

July 30, 2020

The Legislature earlier this month overwhelmingly approved the bill, and it is now on the governor's desk. If the bill is signed into law, it's unclear whether the Sheriff's Department would be required to write a new, stricter policy than the one already on the books.

Satterfield said the Sheriff's Department was "confident in our current policy, and that it meets the requirements of AB 958 if it becomes law."

"We have a policy on deputy cliques, and it is working," he said. "Like all organizational change, it takes time to see the results."

Critics of Villanueva's policy have said it doesn't go far enough to be effective.

L.A. County has paid out at least \$55 million in settlements in cases in which sheriff's deputies have been alleged to belong to a secret society. Several other cases are pending, including one brought by eight deputies who alleged they were routinely harassed by the Banditos.

The deputies alleged the Banditos refused to send back-up on dangerous calls, knocked two deputies unconscious at a department party at an event space called Kennedy Hall, and once secretly removed ammunition from a deputy's gun.

In [another legal claim](#) against the county last year, a deputy made similar allegations about the Executioners, a band of deputies with matching tattoos the deputy claimed wielded vast power at the Compton station. The claim said the group — sporting tattoos of a skull with Nazi imagery and an AK-47 — [celebrated deputy shootings and the induction of new members](#) with "inking parties."

The authors of an [independent study released last week](#) also recommended bolstering the policy Villanueva implemented by defining more specifically what was prohibited

and by requiring deputies to disclose their membership in organizations. The study, which L.A. County officials commissioned the Rand Corp. to conduct in 2019, found that the groups were probably growing.

“Our research suggests that several of these groups were still actively adding members at the time of our interviews,” the report said. The interviews were conducted between November 2019 and September 2020.

A report by the Center for Juvenile Law and Policy at Loyola Law School found that since the 1970s there have been 18 deputy cliques within the Sheriff’s Department, some of which remain active. More recently, the agency has been roiled by allegations that groups of deputies with matching tattoos have run roughshod over the East L.A. and Compton sheriff’s stations.



Alene Tchekmedyian

Alene Tchekmedyian is an investigative reporter at the Los Angeles Times. She previously covered the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, focusing on accountability stories and writing about failures by officials to comply with transparency laws. Before joining The Times in 2016, she reported on crime and policing for the Glendale News-Press and Burbank Leader.



CALIFORNIA

A bowling alley, a boozy fight and allegations of a new deputy gang in Los Angeles



Several L.A. County Sheriff's deputies from Industry station were fired after an off-duty confrontation with teens was reported outside Bowlmum Lanes in Montclair. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

BY KERI BLAKINGER, ALENE TCHEKMEDYIAN

JAN. 11, 2024 11:21 AM PT

On a cool February night two years ago, a group of Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies met up at a Montclair bowling alley, drinking to celebrate the promotion of a new sergeant in their ranks.

At the end of the evening, the party took a turn. The off-duty deputies picked a fight with a group of teenagers in the parking lot, according to two law enforcement sources and a police report reviewed by The Times. A sergeant started it when he pushed open a car door as he walked past, the report says.

Shouting erupted, and one of the deputies allegedly flashed a handgun, according to the report. Some of the others started mocking the teens and shouting obscenities. And before they dispersed, police records show, one deputy punched a 19-year-old in the face.

But once the Sheriff's Department got wind of what happened and started investigating, other troubling details emerged. Two of the men in the group — one deputy and one sergeant — admitted to investigators that they had tattoos officials linked to a deputy gang: the Industry Indians, based out of the City of Industry sheriff's station, according to a law enforcement source.



After the dispute, two men admitted to investigators that they had tattoos officials linked to a deputy gang: the Industry Indians, based out of the City of Industry sheriff's station, according to a law enforcement source. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

"We were shocked by the alleged behavior by our employees involved in that incident," Sheriff Robert Luna told The Times in a recent interview. "Our investigators did a pretty decent job of at least identifying not only the misconduct that occurred — that in my opinion was outrageous — but then getting to a point where some of these individuals were identified to have like tattoos."

The existence of the Industry Indians has not previously been made public, and it's not clear how long the group has existed. Luna said the Bowlum investigation was the first he'd heard of it. A law enforcement source with knowledge of the case said investigators believe there are dozens of members.

Both of the tattooed deputies were fired. Two other deputies who were at the bowling alley that night — but denied having tattoos — were also fired in connection with the

incident, and several others were given lesser disciplinary sentences. Two of the deputies could not be reached for comment. The other two declined to comment through their lawyer.

For decades, the Sheriff's Department has been roiled by allegations that secretive groups of deputies with matching tattoos have been linked to violence and corruption. It's rare for the Sheriff's Department to punish deputies for alleged gang involvement. Department officials would not answer questions about whether similar firings had ever happened before the Bowlum case.

Last year, the Civilian Oversight Commission released a 70-page report condemning the "cancer" of deputy gangs, saying they "create rituals that valorize violence, such as recording all deputy-involved shootings in an official book, celebrating with 'shooting parties,' and authorizing deputies who have shot a community member to add embellishments to their common gang tattoos."

A 2021 [Loyola Law School report](#) identified 18 such groups, known by names like the Grim Reapers, the Banditos and the Executioners. Now, revelations about the Industry Indians show there may be more.

"We have yet to understand how many deputy gangs there are in the department," said Sean Kennedy, who chairs the Civilian Oversight Commission and is one of the authors behind the 2021 report. "But I feel confident saying there are many more that we have not yet discovered."

The deputies involved in the standoff outside the Bowlum bowling alley had all — at some point — worked at the Industry station. The deputy whose promotion they gathered to celebrate had worked there too, but was transferring to a different station, according to the law enforcement sources.

The men drank and bowled until the 11 p.m. closing time, then walked out to their cars together. One deputy peeled off from the others and got into his Mercedes.

According to a law enforcement source and a partially redacted Montclair police report, when the remaining deputies walked past the trunk of a silver Nissan sitting in the parking lot, a sergeant at the back of the group pushed open the rear passenger door just as one of the teens inside was trying to close it.

The deputies kept walking. But, apparently angered, another teen jumped out of the car shouting. Surveillance video captured the sergeant at the back of the group as he turned his cap backward and skipped “quickly toward” the Nissan, according to the Montclair police report. He appeared “eager to confront” the teens, a Montclair investigator wrote.

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The other deputies heard the commotion and turned around. Some began mocking the teens with crying sounds, witnesses told police. According to the police report, others shouted homophobic slurs or obscenities, and one allegedly hurled a challenge: “What are you going to do about it?”



The deputies reportedly involved in the standoff outside the Bowlum bowling alley had all — at some point — worked at the Industry station. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

At some point, several deputies later told police, the teens either mentioned a gun or made a threat to “blast” them — though the police report shows no indication that the teens had any weapons with them that night.

But a witness sitting in a car a few spots away told police that she saw another man in the group walk toward the teens’ car and pull up his green flannel shirt, flashing the handle of a black handgun, according to the police report.

As the dispute intensified, the other deputies gathered around the Nissan, and the deputy who had peeled off from the others minutes earlier drove up in his Mercedes. He hopped out of the car and punched the shouting teen in the face, according to the report. At one point, the sergeant allegedly grabbed the open back door on the passenger side and started swinging it “back and forth violently” about six times, “shaking the entire

vehicle,” according to the police report. Once the tension dissipated, everyone went home.

None of the deputies told their supervisors what happened, the two sources said. Two days later, a witness reported the incident to the Montclair Police Department, which patrols the small city in southwestern San Bernardino County across the Los Angeles County line from Claremont.

Once police picked up the case, they went to the Sheriff’s Department for help figuring out who was in the parking lot that night. When a Montclair investigator called the deputies for questioning, several refused to talk or gave misleading answers.

That March, police sent the case to local prosecutors, requesting that they consider filing a misdemeanor battery charge against one deputy and a misdemeanor charge against another for brandishing a gun.

Ultimately, the San Bernardino County District Attorney’s Office decided not to pursue either case. A spokeswoman for the office told The Times last month that there was “insufficient evidence to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.”

But the Sheriff’s Department — which had only learned of the incident from Montclair police — still moved forward with an administrative investigation.

When sheriff’s investigators interviewed the deputies, one denied flashing his gun and gave conflicting statements about whether he even had it with him that night, the source said. The deputy then told investigators he had a tattoo on his left ankle, but said he didn’t know the name of the person who originally invited him to get it and that it was not associated with a gang, according to the source. Instead, he said he saw it as a recognition of his good work ethic.

The source said that when Sheriff's Department investigators interviewed the sergeant who pushed open the car door, he admitted having an "Industry Indians" tattoo, gave investigators the name of the deputy who invited him to get it and recounted going to an inking party to celebrate.

He said the image resembled the character from Shock Top beer labels, a cartoon face in profile with sunglasses and a mohawk, and that it was something he earned through hard work and compassion. According to the source, he also told investigators his tattoo included the Roman numeral 58 to indicate he was the 58th deputy inked with that image.

The Sheriff's Department faulted him for failing to cooperate with Montclair police, according [to an online report](#). One of the Montclair police officers who investigated the case wrote that the sergeant denied pushing the door open. When the two men spoke on the phone, the police officer "attempted several times" to explain that he was watching the Bowlum's surveillance video as they talked and "could clearly see him pushing the door open."

According to the Montclair report, the sergeant also told police that he didn't see anyone punch the teens — even though the report says surveillance video showed him standing nearby at the time.

Late last year, county disciplinary records show, two deputies and two sergeants were fired. One of them was the newly promoted sergeant, who was allegedly uncooperative and dishonest with Montclair police, initially telling them nothing happened that night.

All of the fired deputies have appealed their punishments to the county's Civil Service Commission, according to a county source familiar with the situation who was not authorized to speak publicly. Last month Luna pointed to that possibility of appeal as the reason he couldn't give more details about the case or how the department plans to investigate the new group.

“We’re being very cautious,” Luna said. “We’re looking at the bigger picture and figuring out as we move forward: What is the best thing to do so we eradicate this problem?”

As of now, it’s not clear how big the problem is: Officials have not said how many people are believed to be part of the Industry Indians, how long the group has been around or whether its members have been involved in other confrontations or acts of violence. The Sheriff’s Department has not yet provided any information in response to a series of public records requests filed last month.

Since the early 1990s, at least half a dozen government-appointed commissions and outside organizations have investigated the problem of deputy gangs, including the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the Citizens’ Commission on Jail Violence, [Loyola Law School](#) and — most recently — the [Civilian Oversight Commission](#).

Based in part on sworn testimony during a series of public hearings, the oversight commission’s 2023 report described what is known about gangs connected with several stations, including South L.A., Century, Lancaster, Compton and East L.A.

At some stations, inked deputies allegedly threatened “work slowdowns” where gang members would slack off on their duties if they didn’t get their way, according to the report. At other stations, deputies described a climate of fear, telling the oversight commission they worried about retaliation if they reported gang members’ misconduct.

At the Compton station, some witnesses recounted being ridiculed and discriminated against by members of a gang known as the Executioners. One lieutenant testified about gang-connected deputies allegedly celebrating at a bar in Fullerton after they’d been involved in a shooting.

But the report focused heavily on the East L.A. station, home to a clique of predominantly Latino deputies who sport tattoos of a skeleton with a sombrero, bandolier and pistol and go by names such as “the Godfather” and “Bam Bam.” In recent

years, the group gained notoriety for their involvement in a late-night deputy-on-deputy dispute outside the Kennedy Hall event space in 2018.

The off-duty clash led to several injuries as well as a [lawsuit](#) filed by eight deputies who alleged that a group of Banditos assaulted them. The case — in which the plaintiffs are seeking a combined \$80 million — is scheduled for trial later this year.

Overall, cases involving alleged members of deputy gangs have cost the county — and taxpayers — [more than \\$55 million in legal](#) payouts. Though none of those cases centered on an Industry Station gang, one other case that went to trial in 2019 included a brief suggestion that such a group might exist.

In that case, a sergeant who had worked at Industry Station was asked on the witness stand whether he had ever heard of an Industry Station tattoo. The sergeant said that he knew of “two or three of them,” including one that was a skull and another that “looked like an Indian.” But he did not reveal any more information about the group after a lawyer for the county quickly objected to the line of questioning.

The case, in which a deputy [alleged he’d been harassed for reporting misconduct](#), ended in an \$8.1-million verdict that was later overturned on appeal and sent back to the lower court. It’s scheduled to go to trial again this summer.

Despite years of damning reports and costly lawsuits, it [wasn’t until 2020](#) that the former sheriff, Alex Villanueva, created a policy prohibiting deputies from joining any group that “promotes behavior that violates the rights of employees or members of the public.”

But critics said that didn’t go far enough, and in its report last year the oversight commission recommended the department adopt a stronger policy. So far, Luna has not yet succeeded in doing that — though recently he told The Times he expects to have a new policy in place sometime this year.

The discipline doled out to the Industry Station deputies fell under the department's old anti-gang policy. It appears to be the first time the policy has been used to terminate an employee — though officials say there are at least two more possible cases on the horizon.

They declined to provide any details about the nature of the cases, citing the need to protect pending investigations.



Keri Blakinger

Keri Blakinger covers the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Before joining the Los Angeles Times in 2023, she spent nearly seven years in Texas, first covering criminal justice for the Houston Chronicle and then covering prisons for the Marshall Project. Her work has appeared everywhere from the BBC to the New York Daily News, from Vice to the Washington Post Magazine, where her 2019 reporting on women in jail helped earn a National Magazine Award. She is the author of "Corrections in Ink," a 2022 memoir about her time in prison.



Alene Tchekmedyian

Alene Tchekmedyian is an investigative reporter at the Los Angeles Times. She previously covered the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, focusing on accountability stories and writing about failures by officials to comply with transparency laws. Before joining The Times in 2016, she reported on crime and policing for the Glendale News-Press and Burbank Leader.

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