



# Drugs and Crime

## Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Profile

Product No. 2002-M0148-003

OCTOBER 2002

U. S. D E P A R T M E N T O F J U S T I C E

# Hells Angels Motorcycle Club

The Hells Angels Motorcycle Club, [REDACTED] with thousands of members in over 200 chapters in the United States and 25 foreign countries, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It is most active in the Pacific, Southwest, West Central, Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic, and New England regions as well as New York and New Jersey and is expanding by forming new chapters and by allowing smaller, [REDACTED] called puppet clubs to become Hells Angels Motorcycle Club chapters.

### Background

The first Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC) chapter was formed in San Bernardino, California, in 1948. Originally known as the Pissed Off Bastards of Bloomington (POBOB), [REDACTED] was reportedly organized by a group of World War II veteran aviators. The second chapter was formed in San Francisco in 1954. In 1957 Ralph Hubert "Sonny" Barger formed a chapter in Oakland. Using his charismatic personality, Barger helped

the Oakland Chapter gain dominance in the HAMC organization and played a key role in aggressively expanding [REDACTED] by forming chapters in many other states and countries throughout the 1960s. The Oakland Chapter is considered to be the Mother Chapter of the club. The first chapter outside the United States was formed in New Zealand in 1961. In 1967 a key expansion of HAMC occurred when the first chapter on the East Coast was formed in Lowell,

~~This document must be protected and not released to unauthorized individuals. It is to be used by persons in your agency who have a "need to know" the sensitive information contained in this document in order to perform an identifiable and authorized government function. It may not be released beyond your agency without the permission of NDIC. It must be stored in a limited access area or in a locked container during non-duty hours. It must be destroyed by shredding or burning.~~

b2, b7d, b7e

Massachusetts. The London Chapter, formed in 1969, was the first in Europe, followed by a chapter in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1970. By the end of 1970 HAMC had 14 chapters in the United States, 2 in Europe, and 1 in New Zealand.

HAMC continued to grow over the next three decades. By the end of the 1970s, the [REDACTED] had added 20 chapters in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia for a total of 37 chapters. During the 1980s the [REDACTED] expanded within the United States, Europe, Canada, and into South America by adding over 30 new chapters. Expansion continued during the 1990s within the United States, Canada, Europe, South America, and into Africa for a total of more than 200 chapters worldwide.

This expansion has created tensions and alliances [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In the first half of 2002, three HAMC members were fatally wounded in clashes with rival [REDACTED]

HAMC is aligned with many smaller [REDACTED] that support its criminal activity such as Red Devils located throughout the United States [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] chapters have attempted to improve HAMC's public image by sponsoring charity events, blood drives, and patriotic rallies. The legendary leader of HAMC, Sonny Barger, travels across the United States promoting his autobiography at various events and presents an image of HAMC as a group of average working men who are simply motorcycle enthusiasts who like to have a good time.

## Organizational Structure

While there is no national or international hierarchy governing all of the chapters, important [REDACTED]

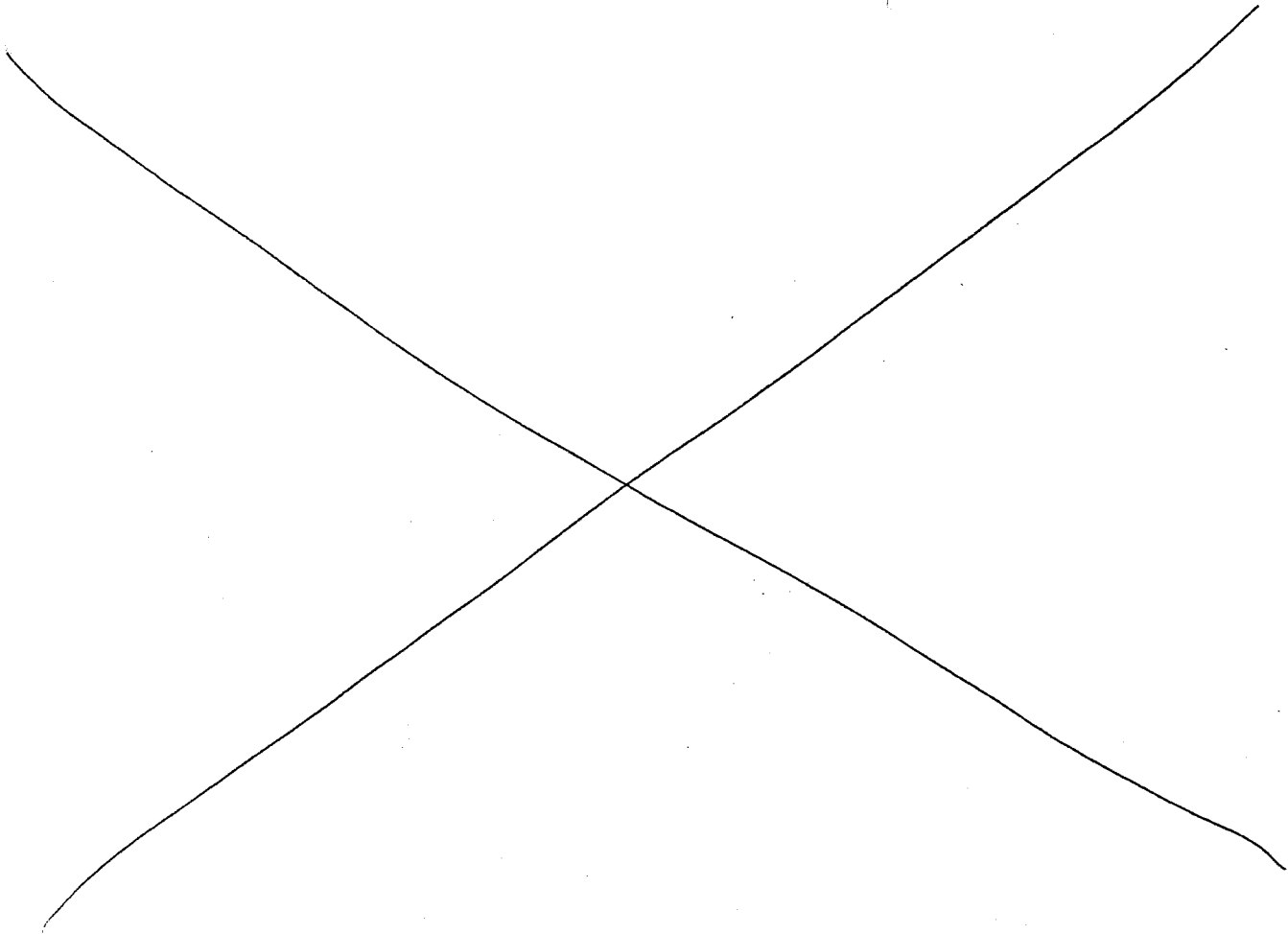
The chapters are grouped into regions, with each region headed by an executive body whose members are elected from the chapters within that region. In the United States HAMC has a West Coast region and an East Coast region, the latter consisting of chapters east of and including the Omaha (NE) Chapter. These regional groups hold regular meetings with a liaison from the other region attending as a nonvoting representative. Foreign chapters also have regional officers' meetings. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The highest level meetings of HAMC occur during what are called the US Run and the World Run, which are held in different locations each year. These meetings are held to discuss international business and critical issues affecting the [REDACTED] worldwide.

Each local chapter operates under HAMC bylaws, which outline the rights and responsibilities of members. The chapter's organizational structure consists of a president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, security officer, and road captain. The president has full authority over the chapter and can veto any decision voted upon by the chapter.

The vice president assumes the duties of the president in his absence. The secretary/treasurer records the chapter meeting minutes and handles chapter finances. The sergeant-at-arms ensures that rules are followed and maintains discipline, [REDACTED]

b2, b7d, b7e



[REDACTED] The road captain organizes chapter runs, making all necessary accommodations for the members.

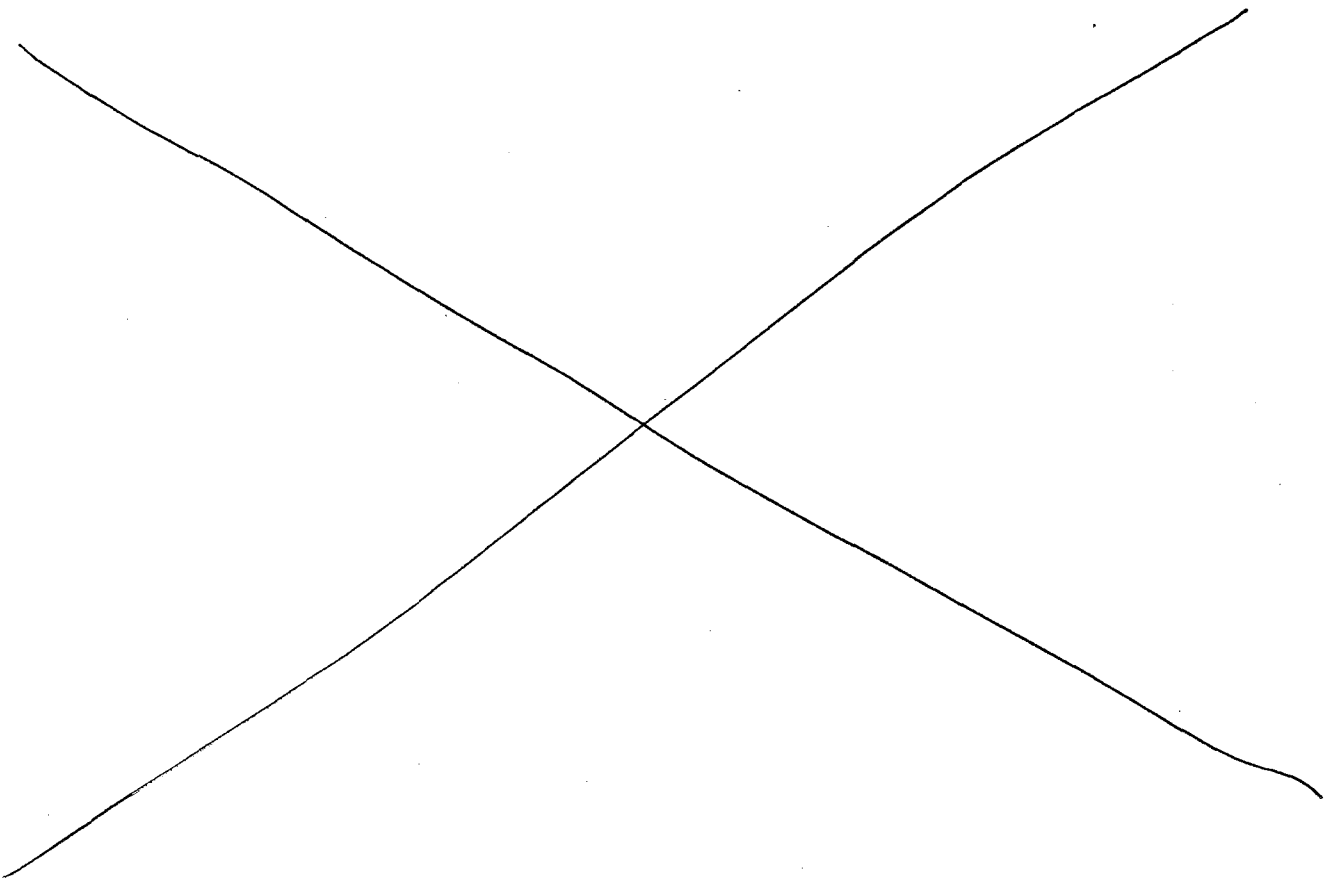
HAMC is an international [REDACTED] with active chapters in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Hells Angels U.S. chapters are located in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Washington.



Most chapters are based in urban areas and maintain a clubhouse where members meet to plan activities. A chapter's influence is centered in the urban area where it is based; however, members often travel well outside their geographic area, especially when smuggling and transporting drugs.

HAMC is a sophisticated organization that was incorporated as a nonprofit entity in California in 1967. HAMC Corporation owns the rights to the words "Hells Angels" and the winged Death Head, the symbol of HAMC, and vigorously defends those rights. HAMC also has obtained trademarks or copyrights in Canada, Taiwan, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and a number of European countries. The Death Head is trademarked in over 50 countries.

b2, b7d, b7e



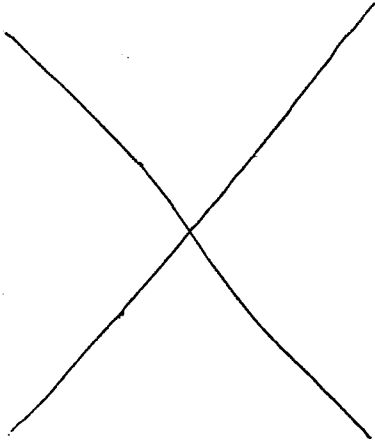
## Membership

HAMC members must be Caucasian, Hispanic, or Asian males over 21 years of age and are required to own a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Prospective members are brought into chapters through a lengthy, phased process designed to measure a potential member's commitment to HAMC and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] After associating with the [REDACTED] for a time, an individual may be identified as a "hangaround" and may do menial tasks and other duties to gain the respect of the members. Generally after 1 year, the hangaround may be sponsored by a member and may become a "prospect" for that chapter. After another year or more, if the prospect receives the unanimous vote of all chapter members, he is allowed to become a full member of HAMC.

In an effort to boost membership and [REDACTED] HAMC is aggressively recruiting new members and, in many instances, shortening the process for membership. It also has increased its sponsorship of smaller, aligned [REDACTED] allowing them to become HAMC "support clubs" to [REDACTED] Many new prospects are being recruited from these support clubs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] During a period of time, usually 1 year, the prospects are evaluated by HAMC to determine their commitment to the organization. If deemed worthy, the prospect chapter members are allowed to become full members of HAMC and the prospect chapter becomes an HAMC chapter.



HAMC members wear distinctive patches, or colors, on the back of leather or denim vests called cuts (collars and sleeves are cut off). The center patch is the caricature of a skull with wings known as the Death Head. Above the Death Head is the top rocker—a white patch

with Hells Angels spelled in large, red letters. Below the Death Head is the bottom rocker—a white patch with the chapter's location spelled in red letters. To the right of the Death Head, members wear an MC (motorcycle club) patch. Because of these colors, the club is referred to as the Red and White.

Other patches are commonly worn on the front of the cuts such as the 1% patch, referring to a statement by the former president of the American Motorcycle Association who said that 99 percent of the motorcycling public are honest, law-abiding citizens and that only 1 percent are troublemakers. Other patches include AFFA (Angels Forever; Forever Angels) and a patch with the member's moniker and/or chapter office. The colors are property of HAMC, are to be worn only by members, [redacted]. Some chapters have additional patches with chapter names such as "Frozen Few" in Anchorage, Alaska.

The HAMC [redacted] is aggressively recruiting new members, including prospective members with business and computer skills [redacted]. Also, the [redacted] is seeking to improve its public image by raising funds and participating in charity events.

### Drug Trafficking

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

### Drug-Related Expansion

George Wethern, former vice president of the Oakland Chapter stated, "We didn't believe in granting charters for the sake of growth. The additions were designed to contribute to our image and business concerns by providing a drug route link, manufacturing a drug, supplying chemicals or distributing drugs in an untapped area."

Source: G. Wethern and V. Colnett, *A Wayward Angel*, 1978.

[redacted]

[redacted]

b2, b7d, b7e

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Drug Sales to Minors**

In March 2001, 28 HAMC members and associates were indicted for selling drugs to high school students in Ventura, California. The drugs had been obtained from an Air Force clinic employee on the Los Angeles Air Force Base in El Segundo. [REDACTED] members had recruited students to sell Valium and Vicodin to fellow students. George Christi, HAMC Ventura Chapter president, was indicted in this case and pleaded guilty to conspiring to sell drugs.

Source: *Los Angeles Times*; *Associated Press*.

**Other Criminal Activity**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

b2, b7d, b7e

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Threat to Law Enforcement**

In Ontario, Canada, HAMC has used sophisticated technology to acquire, store, and publish information about police officers, including photographs, on the Internet.

Source: *Toronto Star*.

[REDACTED]

**Violence**

[REDACTED]

erupted in Scandinavia between 1994 and 1997 and included the use of grenades and antiarmor rockets. From 1994 to 2000 HAMC and the Rock Machine OMG had been involved in multiple instances of violence against each other in Canada. When the Rock Machine OMG patched over to Bandidos in 2000, it sparked violence in Canada between Bandidos and Hells Angels. The 8-year feud has resulted in over 150 deaths. On February 23, 2002, members of HAMC and the Pagan's OMG were involved in a violent clash on Long Island that resulted in the death of one Pagan's member. Then, on April 27, 2002, members of HAMC and the Mongols OMG were involved in a fatal confrontation in Laughlin, Nevada, which resulted in the deaths of two HAMC members and one Mongols member.

**Outlook**

[REDACTED]

---

**Intelligence Gaps**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

b2, b7d, b7e



## Sources

---

### Federal

U.S. Department of Justice  
Criminal Division  
Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
Boston Division  
El Paso Intelligence Center  
Portland (ME) Resident Office  
San Francisco Division  
Immigration and Naturalization Service  
Western Region  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
District of Arizona

U.S. Department of Transportation  
U.S. Coast Guard

### State

[REDACTED]

*Los Angeles Times*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

*New York Daily News*

[REDACTED]

### Regional

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## International

*Associated Press*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

*Reuters*

[REDACTED]

*Toronto Star*

## Other

Barger, Ralph Sonny, *Angel's Angel: The Life and Times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club*. Harper-Collins Publishers, 2000

G. Wethern and V. Colnett, *A Wayward Angel*, Toronto, Longman Canada LTD., 1978

Lavigne, Yves, *Hells Angels: Into the Abyss*. Harper-Collins Publishers, 1997

Major Cities Drug Commanders

[www.mapinc.org](http://www.mapinc.org)

[www.NSNEWS.com](http://www.NSNEWS.com)

This page intentionally left blank.



---

319 Washington Street 5th Floor, Johnstown, PA 15901-1622 • (814) 532-4601  
[www.usdoj.gov/ndic](http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic)

Issues of the Drugs and Crime Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Profiles are available on the following web sites:  
ADNET at <http://ndicosa> and LEO at [home.leo.gov/lesig/ndic](http://home.leo.gov/lesig/ndic)