

Pagans Like Roles as Outlaw Cultists

Largest Motorcycle Gang in East Is Magnet for Trouble

By Carl Bernstein

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Since 1954, Marlon Brando portrayed a leather-jacketed motorcycle tough in the movie "The Wild One," squadrons of free-wheeling, antisocial highway nomads have loomed as a symbol of menace to many communities across the country.

In Washington and other cities on the East Coast, the Pagans—some of whose members were implicated yesterday in the kidnaping and slaying of two members of a rival gang—have come to represent that aura of menace.

Founded in 1964 by 13 Washington men who acknowledged their imitation of the notorious Hell's Angels of California, the Pagans have become the largest motorcycle gang riding under one banner in the East, according to authorities.

The Pagans, police and bikers agree, today have between 15 and 20 chapters on the Atlantic Coast with a total membership of between 500 and 700.

At least four of the groups—including the "mother chapter" in the District of Columbia and others in White Oak, Md., Northern Virginia and Baltimore County—are headquartered near Washington.

Straddling the enormous motorcycles they call "hogs," many of the Pagans—with their fondness for nose rings, swastikas, long hair, gold-cross earrings and tough talk—openly seek the reputation they have gained as outlaw cultists.

On their frequent weekend "runs" to resorts like North Beach and Ocean City in Maryland, members brag about the great quantities of beer, hard liquor, green wine and pills they purport to consume, the fights they claim to have won and the women they boast of conquering.

Although they steadfastly maintain they shy away from violence unless provoked by rival gangs or police, at least part of the Pagans' reputation as magnets for trouble would appear to be justified. For instance:

- In 1966, 55 Washington

Pagans and their followers were jailed in Newark, N.J., when police appeared at the bikers' "First Annual Christmas and Recruiting Party", and allegedly were attacked by scores of their denim-jacketed hosts.

- In March, 1969, a 21-year-old Pagan was found tortured to death in a Lower East Side tenement identified by police as headquarters of the group's New York chapter. Police attributed his death to members

of rival gangs, who allegedly doused his body with gasoline, then set him afire as he was choked by a wire stretched between his legs and neck.

- In June, 1967, Aurin Dale Little, identified by police as a Pagan who used the sobriquet "Little Jesus," was charged in Prince George's County with murder and assault with intent to kill in the shooting of two men. He was later acquitted after testifying that he shot the two men in self-defense.

- Following a 1968 outing in Fairfax County, a Northern Virginia member of Pagans was convicted of committing rape and sodomy on a juvenile.

- In 1966, cyclists identified as members of the Pa-

gans and the Avengers—a rival gang—staged a shootout in an Arlington County shopping center in which more than 50 shots were fired and 16 members of both gangs, arrested. The Saints, two of whose members were found dead Wednesday, are an offshoot of the Avengers, according to police and bikers here.

- James C. McClure, 30, a former Pagan, is now on trial in U. S. District Court on charges of shooting a high school student to death during an altercation in Georgetown. His lawyers say they will claim the shooting was in self-defense.

Despite such brushes with the law, the Pagans tend to regard themselves as exemplars of a style of

rugged individualism that has led to oppression and persecution by police and the press.

"Most people forget that we have jobs and earn a living," one Washington Pagan said yesterday. "You have to be productive if you're going to sink \$2,000 or \$3,000 into a chopped-down bike"—which serves as the fulcrum of Pagan social and even family life.

"I've been with the Pagans for more than five years now," the biker said. "We just like to go out and get drunk together and ride. We like to be able to take off whenever we want for Atlantic City or someplace and party. That's what it's all about."



By Ken Felt—The Washington Post

Sgt. John F. Briggman, of the Fairfax police, shows newsmen where one of two bodies were found last Wednesday.