

THE NEW GANGS OF NEW YORK

THEY'RE YOUNGER, HARDER TO CATCH, AND QUICKER TO VIOLENCE. WHO HOLDS SWAY WHERE.

THE CURRENT criminal underworld is characterized not by the Mafia dons and heroin kings of yesteryear but by a chaotic universe of warring, decentralized ganglets. And the members are less likely to be battle-hardened parolees than “puppies,” adolescent gangbangers who are too young to have a driver’s license but who are committing violent crimes at alarming levels. “A few years ago, you would see kids 19, 20 years old,” says one NYPD veteran who works the gang beat in Harlem. “Now these kids are babies—15, 14—and they are vicious. They will shoot you in a heartbeat and not think twice about it.”

So who are they? And where are they? “Everywhere,” says Michael Hines, a gang mediator at the city-funded Council for Unity. “It’s not like the old days, where you had Bloods and Crips and there was a political ideology. These kids just get together, call themselves whatever.” But with so many crews and cliques—Money Over Bitches, Vatos Locos, 40 Wolves, Gun Clappin Goonies, Get Money Boys, From Da Zoo, the New Dons, 28 Gunnaz, Stack Money Family, and so on—it’s hard for even the most connected gangbanger to keep everybody straight.

—GEOFFREY GRAY

Albanian Boys Inc.

In recent years, Albanian gangs have become so powerful that the Feds now treat them as an organized-crime syndicate, the “sixth family” of La Cosa Nostra. In the Bronx, the coffee shops on Arthur Avenue—long the stomping grounds of Italian wiseguys—seem to have changed allegiances. “The Albanians are like the Italians used to be,” says one low-level Gambino soldier. “They show up with like 100 guys. You’re not just fighting one guy. They stick together.”

RECENT INCIDENT: In June, the Krasniqi brothers, leaders of an alleged international marijuana-smuggling ring, were arrested in Dongan Hills, Staten Island. According to the indictment, the Krasniqs were selling pot to dealers, then robbing them of the drugs.

Bloods

Though considered the city’s largest gang, the Bloods actually comprise dozens of unrelated cliques adopting various identifiers. Bloods no longer “flag” their presence with red bandannas, opting for less visible “crates”—bracelets with red and black beads. Many crew leaders run street operations from Rikers Island and prisons upstate.

RECENT INCIDENT: A war raged throughout the summer in Spanish Harlem between two Bloods-aligned sects: the Flow Boyz and the Cash Money Brothers. “They were just shooting up everything,” says a Harlem cop. “One person gets shot, then it’s retaliation for the shooting, then retaliation for the retaliation—a nasty cycle.”

Crips

The blue- or gray-wearing Crips are one of the country’s largest gangs, but in New York Crips are reportedly outnumbered three to one by Bloods. To compete with larger crews, they have had to form unusual alliances: In April, four sects of Crips—the Hassock Boys, Gang of Apes, Wildmeda, and Get It in Bricks—were busted for teaming up with a number of Bloods-affiliated members to expand drug operations in South Jamaica and Far Rockaway.

RECENT INCIDENT: In April, four people were shot and 56 minors were arrested or issued summonses in a wild mêlée in Times Square that may have been a Crips initiation rite. (In another sign of the changing times, the gathering was organized via Twitter.)

MS-13

Started by Salvadoran laborers wanting to protect themselves from other gangs, MS-13 is now so dangerous that the FBI developed its own national task force to track it. Most of its estimated 10,000 members live along the Mexican border, where they run illegal-alien-smuggling rings. In the city, MS-13 members are found in Jackson Heights and Elmhurst, as well as throughout Long Island.

RECENT INCIDENT: Twenty alleged MS-13 members gathered on a Uniondale man’s lawn earlier this month, threatening to “kill your family and your babies.” The owner fired off four warning shots and was later arrested.

Born To Kill (BTK)

Once considered the most dangerous street gang in Chinatown, Born to Kill is now a loose consortium of Vietnamese, who no longer use the moniker BTK for fear of being collared under RICO gang statutes. “They don’t say, ‘I’m BTK.’ They say, ‘I follow so-and-so,’” says a former Chinatown cop. They’re still quite active within the scrum of illegal-knockoff vendors on Canal Street. Other Chinatown gangs, like Ghost Shadow on Mott Street and the Flying Dragons on Pell Street, mostly concentrate their efforts on low-level extortion rackets.

Latin Kings

Like many gangs, the Kings were born in state prison in the eighties and, along with the Bloods, are considered the most powerful gang on Rikers Island. Despite maintaining a violent reputation, they assume a lower public profile in the streets.

RECENT INCIDENT: In late June, eighteen alleged Kings were arrested for using Molotov cocktails to firebomb two houses belonging to the mother and girlfriend of a member who wanted out of the gang. In July, investigators in the Bronx busted an alleged Kings clique for running a \$40,000-a-day heroin operation in Bedford Park.

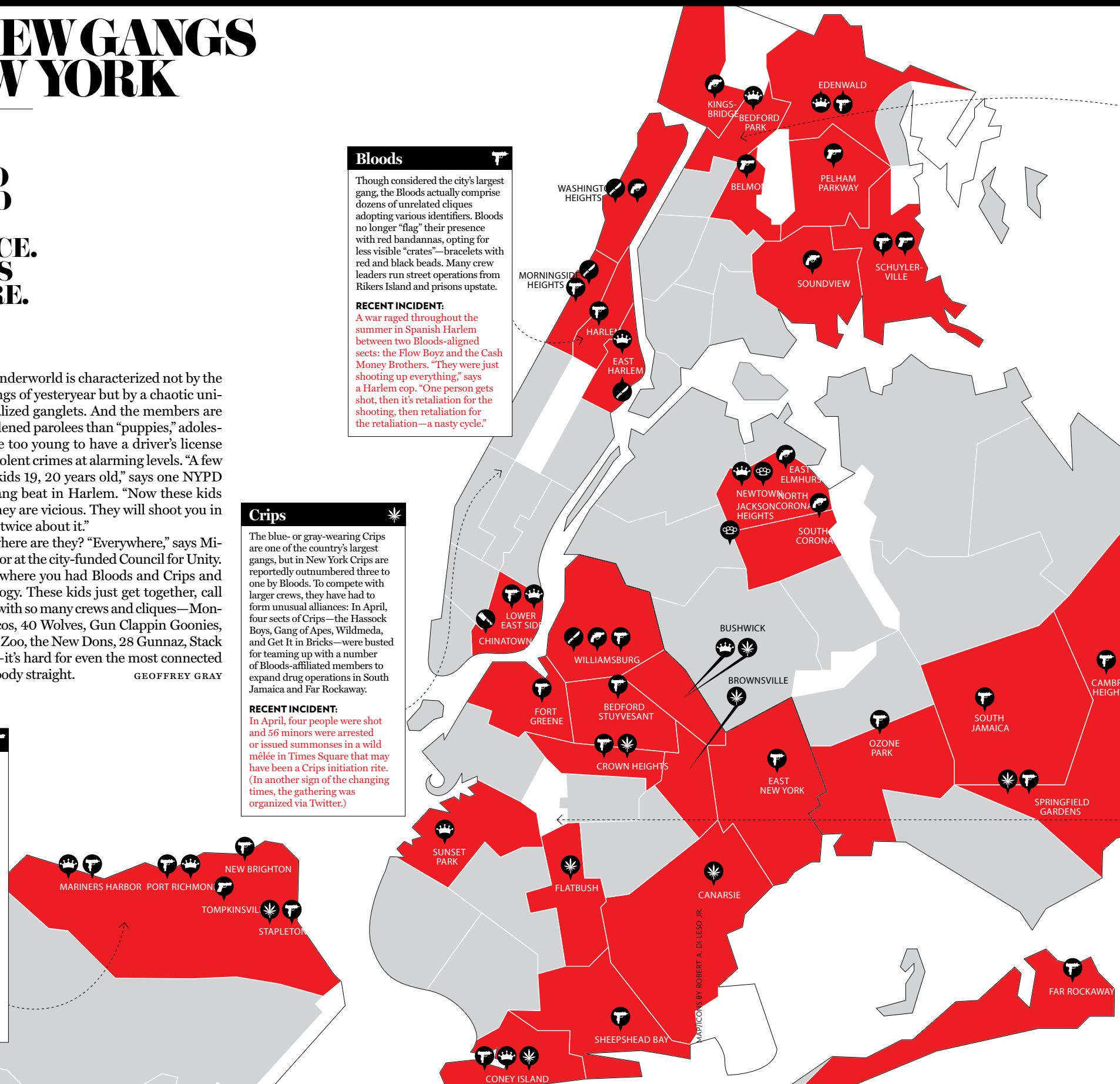
Trinitarios

Considered one of the fastest-growing gangs in New York, the Trinitarios (a.k.a. 3NI) were formed by Dominicans in Sing Sing in the late eighties and have since spread throughout the East Coast. Their gang color is green, and their weapon of choice is the machete, sometimes laced with poison.

Dominicans Don't Play (DDP)

Often rivals to the Trinitarios and the Latin Kings, Dominicans Don't Play are found in Washington Heights and throughout the city. As with other Latino gangs, members of DDP prefer to use machetes to settle disputes.

RECENT INCIDENT: In April, an alleged DDP member was walking with his girlfriend around 5:30 p.m. on the Parade Ground in Prospect Park when he was jumped by more than a dozen rivals and fatally hacked with a machete.



GANGS KEY	ALBANIAN BOYS INC.	BORN TO KILL