

vice lord gang members

vice lord gang members are a significant and notorious group within the spectrum of American street gangs, particularly known for their origins and influence in Chicago. This article explores the history, structure, activities, and sociocultural impact of the Vice Lords, one of the largest and most organized gangs in the United States. Understanding the roles and organization of Vice Lord gang members provides insight into urban gang dynamics, criminal enterprises, and community challenges. The discussion includes detailed sections on their historical background, membership characteristics, criminal activities, law enforcement responses, and the gang's influence on culture and society. Additionally, the article examines the efforts made towards gang intervention and rehabilitation. The following table of contents outlines the main areas covered in this comprehensive overview.

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History and Origins of the Vice Lord Gang

The Vice Lord gang originated in the 1950s on the West Side of Chicago. Initially formed as a youth organization aimed at providing support and protection for African American youths in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the gang quickly evolved into a more structured criminal enterprise. Vice lord gang members were initially influenced by social conditions such as poverty, segregation, and discrimination, factors that contributed to their rapid growth and territorial control. Over time, the gang became one of Chicago's most powerful street organizations, engaging in various illicit activities and expanding their influence beyond the city limits.

Early Formation and Development

The roots of the Vice Lord gang trace back to the mid-20th century when young individuals sought

solidarity and defense against rival groups. The name “Vice Lords” was chosen to reflect an air of power and control. Early Vice Lord gang members operated primarily in neighborhoods such as North Lawndale and Austin, establishing street-level dominance. The gang’s early focus included protection rackets and street-level drug sales, which later expanded into more complex criminal endeavors.

Growth and Expansion

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Vice lord gang members grew in number and organization. The gang expanded its reach to other cities and states, forming alliances with other criminal groups and creating a network for drug trafficking and other illegal activities. This period marked the transformation of the Vice Lords into a multi-faceted and highly organized criminal syndicate capable of coordinated operations.

Organization and Structure of Vice Lord Gang Members

The Vice Lord gang maintains a hierarchical and disciplined organizational structure, which contributes to its longevity and operational efficiency. Vice lord gang members are often divided into various factions or “sets,” each controlling specific territories and activities. Leadership roles within the gang include commanders, lieutenants, and foot soldiers, with strict rules governing membership, conduct, and loyalty.

Hierarchy and Leadership Roles

At the top of the Vice Lord gang’s hierarchy are the supreme leaders who make strategic decisions and oversee large-scale operations. Below them are regional commanders who manage local sets and enforce discipline among members. Vice lord gang members occupying lower ranks typically carry out day-to-day criminal activities, such as drug distribution and enforcement. This tiered structure allows for efficient communication and control across different levels of the gang.

Membership Recruitment and Initiation

Recruitment into the Vice Lord gang often targets young men living in impoverished and marginalized communities. Initiation rites can include committing crimes or demonstrating loyalty through acts of violence or service to the gang. Vice lord gang members are expected to abide by a code of conduct that emphasizes secrecy, respect, and obedience. Recruitment efforts also focus on maintaining the gang’s influence and replenishing its ranks as older members are incarcerated or removed.

Criminal Activities and Operations

Vice lord gang members engage in a wide array of criminal activities that generate significant illicit profits and sustain the gang's power. These activities range from street-level offenses to organized crime operations involving drug trafficking, extortion, and weapons distribution. The gang's criminal enterprises are often interconnected, with different factions specializing in various illegal markets.

Drug Trafficking and Distribution

One of the primary sources of income for Vice Lord gang members is the trafficking and sale of narcotics, including cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. The gang operates sophisticated networks to procure, transport, and distribute drugs within urban centers and beyond. This drug trade fuels violence and competition with rival gangs, contributing to high crime rates in affected neighborhoods.

Other Criminal Enterprises

In addition to drug trafficking, vice lord gang members are involved in:

- Illegal firearms trafficking and possession
- Robbery and burglary
- Extortion and protection rackets
- Money laundering and fraud schemes
- Human trafficking and prostitution rings

These diversified criminal activities allow the gang to maintain financial stability and exert control over its territories.

Law Enforcement and Legal Actions

Law enforcement agencies at local, state, and federal levels have targeted Vice Lord gang members through various initiatives aimed at disrupting their criminal operations. These efforts include surveillance, undercover operations, and coordinated raids. Legal actions have resulted in numerous arrests, prosecutions, and convictions of key gang figures.

Gang Task Forces and Investigations

Specialized gang task forces have been established to combat the influence of the Vice Lords. These units gather intelligence on gang activities, monitor communications, and build cases against members responsible for violent crimes and drug trafficking. Collaboration between agencies has enhanced the effectiveness of these efforts.

Legal Consequences and Sentencing

Vice lord gang members convicted of crimes often face significant prison sentences, especially when charged under federal statutes related to drug trafficking and gang-related violence. Sentencing guidelines have been designed to deter gang involvement and dismantle organizational structures. However, challenges remain due to the gang's ability to regenerate and recruit new members.

Community Impact and Cultural Influence

The presence of Vice Lord gang members has profound effects on communities, influencing social dynamics, economic conditions, and cultural expressions. While the gang is often associated with violence and crime, its role within certain neighborhoods is complex, sometimes providing a sense of identity and belonging to marginalized youth.

Social and Economic Effects

The activities of Vice Lord gang members contribute to elevated crime rates, reduced property values, and strained community resources. Residents may experience fear and instability, impacting quality of life and access to opportunities. Conversely, some community members view the gang as a form of protection against external threats, complicating efforts to address the underlying issues.

Representation in Media and Popular Culture

Vice lord gang members have been depicted in various forms of media, including films, music, and literature. These representations often highlight the gang's reputation for violence and street power while also exploring themes of survival, loyalty, and social injustice. Such portrayals influence public perceptions and sometimes glamorize gang life, affecting recruitment and identity among youth.

Gang Intervention and Rehabilitation Efforts

Efforts to reduce the influence of Vice Lord gang members focus on prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs designed to provide alternatives to gang involvement. These initiatives involve collaboration among law enforcement, social services, community organizations, and former gang members.

Prevention and Outreach Programs

Prevention strategies aim to address root causes such as poverty, lack of education, and limited employment opportunities. Outreach programs work to engage at-risk youth through mentorship, education, and recreational activities, diverting them from gang recruitment. These programs emphasize positive role models and community support networks.

Rehabilitation and Reentry Services

For Vice Lord gang members seeking to leave the gang lifestyle, rehabilitation services provide counseling, job training, and assistance with reintegration into society. Reentry programs focus on reducing recidivism by addressing behavioral and social challenges faced by former members. Success in these efforts depends on comprehensive support and community involvement.

1. Historical significance of Vice Lord gang members in urban America
2. Complex organizational hierarchy enabling sustained criminal operations
3. Diverse criminal activities fueling gang profitability and violence
4. Law enforcement strategies targeting gang dismantlement
5. Community challenges and cultural implications of gang presence
6. Comprehensive intervention and rehabilitation programs for gang members

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are the Vice Lords gang members?

Vice Lords gang members are individuals affiliated with the Vice Lords, a prominent street gang originating in Chicago. They are known for their involvement in various criminal activities and have a complex organizational structure.

What is the history of Vice Lords gang members?

Vice Lords gang members trace their origins to the late 1950s in Chicago. Initially formed as a community organization to combat violence, they eventually evolved into a street gang involved in drug trafficking and other illegal activities.

Where are Vice Lords gang members primarily located?

Vice Lords gang members are primarily located in Chicago, Illinois, but their presence has spread to other parts of the United States through various factions and alliances.

What criminal activities are Vice Lords gang members involved in?

Vice Lords gang members are involved in a range of criminal activities including drug trafficking, weapons trafficking, robbery, and violent crimes such as assaults and homicides.

How are Vice Lords gang members organized?

Vice Lords gang members are organized into various sets or factions, each with its own leadership. The gang operates with a hierarchical structure that controls territory and manages illicit activities.

Additional Resources

1. *Vice Lords: Warriors of the Streets*

This book offers an in-depth look into the origins and evolution of the Vice Lords gang in Chicago. It explores the socio-economic conditions that fueled the rise of the gang and provides personal accounts from former members. The narrative sheds light on their internal codes, rivalries, and impact on the community.

2. *Blood and Brotherhood: Inside the Vice Lords*

A gritty, firsthand account of life inside the Vice Lords, this book delves into the brotherhood and loyalty that define the gang. It covers the challenges members face, from violent turf wars to the struggle for identity within the urban landscape. The author also discusses efforts at rehabilitation and community outreach.

3. *From Streets to Syndicate: The Vice Lords' Empire*

This title chronicles the transformation of the Vice Lords from a street gang into a sophisticated criminal syndicate. It examines their involvement in drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, and political corruption. The book also highlights law enforcement strategies aimed at dismantling their operations.

4. *Vice Lords: A Legacy of Violence and Survival*

Focusing on the cyclical nature of violence within the Vice Lords, this book presents stories of survival amid relentless conflict. It addresses the gang's impact on families and neighborhoods, as well as the social dynamics that perpetuate gang membership. Interviews with community leaders provide insight into potential solutions.

5. *Code of the Vice Lords: Rules and Rituals*

This work uncovers the unique code of conduct and rituals that govern the Vice Lords. From initiation ceremonies to conflict resolution methods, the book reveals the structure that maintains order within the gang. It also explores how these traditions influence members' behavior both inside and outside the gang.

6. *Vice Lords and the Chicago Underworld*

An investigative study into the Vice Lords' role within the broader Chicago criminal underworld. The book investigates alliances and rivalries with other gangs, their economic influence, and interactions with political figures. It provides a comprehensive picture of how the gang fits into the city's complex crime network.

7. *Breaking Chains: Former Vice Lords Tell Their Stories*

Featuring interviews with ex-Vice Lords, this book highlights the personal journeys of those who have left gang life behind. It discusses the struggles of reintegration, the lure of the streets, and the efforts to find redemption. The narratives offer hope and cautionary tales for at-risk youth.

8. *Vice Lords: The Politics of Power and Violence*

This book explores the intersection of gang activity and urban politics through the lens of the Vice Lords. It examines how the gang has leveraged power to influence elections and community decisions. The analysis also covers the consequences of such political entanglements.

9. *Surviving Vice Lords: A Community's Fight for Peace*

Focusing on the community's response to the Vice Lords' presence, this title details grassroots movements aimed at reducing violence. It highlights programs led by activists, faith groups, and local officials working to restore safety and opportunity. The book underscores the resilience and determination of neighborhoods affected by gang activity.

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vice lord gang members: Street Gangs Throughout the World Herbert Covey, 2021-07-01

This new third edition provides an update on what is known about street gangs throughout the world and summarizes some of the major works on street gang phenomena. It focuses on those countries that have a greater presence in the literature. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the topic of street gangs throughout the world. Chapter 2 identifies some of the challenges faced by scholars when studying gangs in different countries. Chapter 3 reviews some of the basic research on street gangs in the United States and Canada. Chapter 4 covers what is known about street gangs in Europe and Russia. Chapter 5 reviews the literature on street gangs in one of the hottest areas of the world for gangs, Central America. In addition, this chapter examines South American and Caribbean gangs. Street gangs in Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua, Trinidad, and other countries are covered. The presence of street gangs and gang violence in these and other countries has been identified as a major factor in the mass migration of refugees to the United States. Chapter 6 reports on the street gangs of Africa. Research on gangs in South Africa goes back decades and the country has a unique history on how gangs evolved. Other countries, such as Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya are developing a body of literature that highlights the distinctive nature of gangs and gang members in these countries. Chapter 7 addresses street gangs in Asia, including China, India, Hong Kong (post-reunification), Japan, and other countries. This chapter provides rare glimpses of gangs in China, a relatively secretive country. Although different in many ways from gangs in Asia, information is also included here about gangs in Australia and New Zealand. Practitioners in the criminal justice and juvenile justice fields will find this book to be a valuable resource.

vice lord gang members: Gangs in America III C. Ronald Huff, 2001-11-06

The Third Edition of this popular anthology examines contemporary gangs, gang life, and law enforcement efforts to study and coordinate the community's response to them. The book contains original essays from a broad array of renowned researchers and experienced practitioners who work with gangs. A wide variety of current topics and issues are covered, including: female gangs and ganging; ethnic diversity; economic, neighborhood and school contexts of gang behavior; gun and drug relationships, and research methods used in the study of gangs. As communities face ever-growing gang-related problems, *Gangs in America III* provides the most up-to-date information on the diverse perspectives and complex issues that arise in our efforts to understand, prevent, and control gang violence and crime. For Your Courses in: Criminology Criminal Justice Sociology Victimization Text Recommended for: Upper Division Undergraduate Level Graduate Level

vice lord gang members: SEARCH for A BLACK GODDESS: MEMOIR of a GANG

MEMBER Thomas CAMPBELL, 2009-12-12 Thomas Campbell writes with deep understanding of The Cold War, the cocaine coup of Bolivia, the murder of Che Guevara and the murky world of mercenary terrorist. The novel was written from the confines of Thomas's prison cell and it tells how, as a pair of crooked DEA agents, Hilliard Wallace and Basil Abbott, maneuvered the Vice Lords and the Latin Kings to service an insatiable market for cocaine. After Thomas is released from prison his efforts to be published causes him to become a fugitive. In the nightmare of the chase, Thomas shares a desperate, spiritual love with passionate Dahl Ransby, an aspiring poet. Within a few pages, both sexual drama and the novel's political exposé will hook readers, as a terror-filled race provides an unforgettable climax.

vice lord gang members: The Vice Lords R. Lincoln Keiser, 1979

vice lord gang members: Police Files: The Spokane Experience 1853-1995 M. Kienholz, 1999

vice lord gang members: The Five Percenters Michael Muhammad Knight, 2013-10-01 From Malcolm X to the Wu Tang Clan, the first in-depth account of this fascinating black power movement

With a cast of characters ranging from Malcolm X to 50 Cent, Knight's compelling work is the first detailed account of the movement inextricably linked with black empowerment, Islam, New York, and hip-hop. Whether discussing the stars of Five Percenter rap or 1980s crack empires, this fast-paced investigation uncovers the community's icons and heritage, and examines its growing influence in urban American youth culture.

vice lord gang members: Gangland Laura L. Finley, 2018-10-01 This two-volume set integrates informative encyclopedia entries and essential primary documents to provide an illuminating overview of trends in gang membership and activity in America in the 21st century. *Gangland: An Encyclopedia of Gang Life from Cradle to Grave* includes extended discussion of specific gangs; types of gangs based on ethnicity and environment (rural, suburban, and urban); recruitment and retention methods; leadership structure and other internal dynamics of various gangs; impacts of gang membership on extended family; the historical evolution of gangs in American society; depictions of gang life in popular culture; violent and nonviolent gang activities; and programs, policies, agencies, and organizations that have been crafted to combat gang activities. In addition, the encyclopedia includes a suite of primary sources that offer a look into the personal experiences of gang members, examine efforts by law enforcement and public officials to address gang activity, and address wider societal factors that make eradicating gangs such a difficult task.

vice lord gang members: From Disgrace to Dignity Clemens Bartollas, 2019-01-14 From *Disgrace to Dignity: Redemption in the Life of Willie Rico Johnson* examines the life of Rico Johnson who became the head of the Conservative Vice Lords, one of the largest street gangs in the United States. In addition to highlighting his life, this work considers how redemption has affected his life. In addition, Minister Rico is identified as a Godfather. Much like the Godfathers found in organized crime families, Rico sees himself as providing a positive force to Vice Lords' gang members. On one hand, what this involves is taking care of their needs (he feeds 150 families a day) and, on the other hand, providing guidance and direction for members' lives.

vice lord gang members: Gangs and Organized Crime George W. Knox, Gregg Etter, Carter F. Smith, 2018-07-04 In *Gangs and Organized Crime*, George W. Knox, Gregg W. Etter, and Carter F. Smith offer an informed and carefully investigated examination of gangs and organized crime groups, covering street gangs, prison gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and organized crime groups from every continent. The authors have spent decades investigating gangs as well as researching their history and activities, and this dual professional-academic perspective informs their analysis of gangs and crime groups. They take a multidisciplinary approach that combines criminal justice, public policy and administration, law, organizational behavior, sociology, psychology, and urban planning perspectives to provide insight into the actions and interactions of a variety of groups and their members. This textbook is ideal for criminal justice and sociology courses on gangs as well as related course topics like gang behavior, gang crime and the inner city, organized crime families, and transnational criminal groups. *Gangs and Organized Crime* is also an excellent addition to the professional's reference library or primer for the general reader. More information is available at the supporting website - www.gangsandorganizedcrime.com

vice lord gang members: A Dictionary of Gangs Bill Sanders, 2019-02-05 A worldwide fascination with gangs is evident: they are a major focus of the criminal justice system and the object of much media attention. This new Oxford Reference title of over 250 entries gives a concise overview of key terms used in the study and understanding of gangs - the first dictionary of its kind to focus on gang vernacular. Broad in scope, it covers: colloquialisms used in gang culture to describe certain behaviours common among gang members, such as caught slipping and jumped in; sociological and criminological terms in relation to gangs, such as social disorganization and social learning; as well as general academic concepts which apply to gangs, including Critical Race Theory, acculturation, moral panic, and identity. It also includes entries on gangs both inside and outside of the United States and theories of key gang researchers.

vice lord gang members: Ten Ways to Detect and Detour Children From Gang Membership Charles Anthony Dickerson, 2020-11-10 Children as young as nine can unwittingly become involved

or associated with gangs and gang activity. Quite often, an uninformed and seemingly harmless choice quickly becomes a spiral into gang involvement and gun violence. Parents, grandparents, and caregivers often have no idea how to detect their children's involvement in gang activity, and if they do, they don't know what to do about it. Learn the true politics of being a gang member. Stories and interviews with active, former, and retired gang members provide a realistic picture of what gang membership looks like, giving ample reasons to avoid it. Each chapter provides the tools and instruction to educate and help parents and caregivers choose and create a safer and healthier lifestyle—and future—for their children

vice lord gang members: King of the North Jeanne Theoharis, 2025-04-01 A Ms. Magazine Most Anticipated Book From the New York Times bestselling author, a radical reframing of the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. "Theoharis shows us through penetrating research and sensitive, scholarly insight that Dr. King not only was keenly aware of the history of antiblack racism in the North, but battled it from the very beginning of his career." —Henry Louis Gates Jr. The Martin Luther King Jr. of popular memory vanquished Jim Crow in the South. But in this myth-shattering book, award-winning and New York Times bestselling historian Jeanne Theoharis argues that King's time in Boston, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago—outside Dixie—was at the heart of his campaign for racial justice. King of the North follows King as he crisscrosses the country from the Northeast to the West Coast, challenging school segregation, police brutality, housing segregation, and job discrimination. For these efforts, he was relentlessly attacked by white liberals, the media, and the federal government. In this bold retelling, King emerges as a someone who not only led a movement but who showed up for other people's struggles; a charismatic speaker who also listened and learned; a Black man who experienced police brutality; a minister who lived with and organized alongside the poor; and a husband who—despite his flaws—depended on Coretta Scott King as an intellectual and political guide in the national fight against racism, poverty, and war. King of the North speaks directly to our struggles over racial inequality today. Just as she restored Rosa Parks's central place in modern American history, so Theoharis radically expands our understanding of King's life and work—a vision of justice unfulfilled in the present.

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vice lord gang members: Juvenile Justice Steven M. Cox, Jennifer M. Allen, Robert D. Hanser, 2017-08-17 The text is written from a practical standpoint, which students are likely to understand and appreciate. —Lindsey Livingston Runell, J.D., Ph.D., Kutztown University Brief, focused, and up-to-date, Juvenile Justice: A Guide to Theory, Policy, and Practice, Ninth Edition, is a must-have text that takes students on a journey through the practical realities of the juvenile justice system and the most current topics in the field. Students not only learn about the history, process, and theories of the juvenile justice system, but they also gain access to the latest crime measurements and explore important issues such as community-based sanctions, treatment and rehabilitation, gangs, and international youth crime. Emphasizing evidence-based practices, the authors guide readers through the methods and problems of the system and offer realistic insights for students interested in a career in juvenile justice. Real-life examples, excellent pedagogical features, and a complete online ancillary package are provided to help instructors effectively teach the course and help students learn interactively. Give your students the SAGE edge! SAGE edge offers a robust online environment featuring an impressive array of free tools and resources for review, study, and further exploration, keeping both instructors and students on the cutting edge of teaching and learning. Learn more at edge.sagepub.com/coxjj9e.

vice lord gang members: Federal Probation , 1978

vice lord gang members: The Chicago Freedom Movement Mary Lou Finley, Bernard LaFayette Jr., James R. Ralph Jr., Pam Smith, 2016-04-22 Six months after the Selma to Montgomery marches and just weeks after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a group from Martin Luther King Jr.'s staff arrived in Chicago, eager to apply his nonviolent approach to social change in a northern city. Once there, King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) joined the locally based Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCCO) to form the Chicago Freedom Movement. The open housing demonstrations they organized eventually resulted in a controversial agreement with Mayor Richard J. Daley and other city leaders, the fallout of which has historically led some to conclude that the movement was largely ineffective. In this important volume, an eminent team of scholars and activists offer an alternative assessment of the Chicago Freedom Movement's impact on race relations and social justice, both in the city and across the nation. Building upon recent works, the contributors reexamine the movement and illuminate its lasting contributions in order to challenge conventional perceptions that have underestimated its impressive legacy.

vice lord gang members: Corrections Michael Welch, 2013-10-14 Review questions; Recommended readings; 3. America's Penal Past; Introduction; Colonial America; Methods of punishment; William Penn and the Great Law; Analyzing punishment in colonial America; Prisons in the nation's early years; Newgate Prison, Connecticut: subterranean incarceration and political imprisonment; The Walnut Street Jail: penal reform and the quest for state power; Newgate Prison, New York City; The Jacksonian era; Reconceptualizing crime as a social problem; The Pennsylvania and Auburn systems of prison discipline; Elam Lynds: warden of Auburn and Sing Sing.

vice lord gang members: Real Gangstas Timothy R. Lauger, 2012-09-01 Street gangs are a major concern for residents in many inner-city communities. However, gangs' secretive and, at times, delinquent tendencies limit most people's exposure to the realities of gang life. Based on eighteen months of qualitative research on the streets of Indianapolis, *Real Gangstas* provides a unique and intimate look at the lives of street gang members as they negotiate a dangerous peer environment in a major midwestern city. Timothy R. Lauger interviewed and observed a mix of fifty-five gang members, former gang members, and non-gang street offenders. He spent much of his fieldwork time in the company of a particular gang, the "Down for Whatever Boyz," who allowed him to watch and record many of their day-to-day activities and conversations. Through this extensive research, Lauger is able to understand and explain the reasons for gang membership, including a chaotic family life, poverty, and the need for violent self-assertion in order to foster the creation of a personal identity. Although the book exposes many troubling aspects of gang life, it is not a simple descriptive or a sensationalistic account of urban despair and violence. Steeped in the tradition of analytical ethnography, the study develops a central theoretical argument: combinations of street gangs within cities shape individual gang member behavior within those urban settings. Within Indianapolis, members of rival gangs interact on a routine basis within an ambiguous and unstable environment. Participants believe that many of their contemporaries claiming gang affiliations are not actually "real" gang members, but instead are imposters who gain access to the advantages of gang membership through fraud and pretense. Consequently, the ability to discern "real" gang members—or to present oneself successfully as a real gang member—is a critical part of gangland Indianapolis. *Real Gangstas* offers an objective and fair characterization of active gang members, successfully balancing the seemingly conflicting idea that they generally seem like normal teenagers, yet are abnormally concerned with—and too often involved in—violence. Lauger takes readers to the edge of an actual gang conflict, providing a rare and up-close look at the troubling processes that facilitate hostility and violence.

vice lord gang members: Art for People's Sake Rebecca Zorach, 2019-03-28 In the 1960s and early 1970s, Chicago witnessed a remarkable flourishing of visual arts associated with the Black Arts Movement. From the painting of murals as a way to reclaim public space and the establishment of independent community art centers to the work of the AFRICOBRA collective and Black filmmakers,

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