

# Minnesota official threatens city's gang members

*By Rashard Zanders  
Special to Sentinel-Voice*  
MINNEAPOLIS (NNPA) - St. Paul Director of Human Rights Tyrone Terrill has issued a controversial warning singling out African-American gang members (or gang-bangers), their loved ones, and those who shield their harmful activities and affiliations from law enforcement: Gang members have until June 1, 2005, to completely remove themselves from any affiliation with gangs or known gang organizations or suffer the consequences of their actions, according to Terrill.

Terrill's written admonishment, complete with city of St. Paul letterhead, is addressed as "An open letter to the African-American Community."

Why African-American gang violence was singled out from the whole remains unclear. No similar open letters were addressed to the U.S. government and its militaries, nor professional sports leagues, television and large media. Also avoiding the director's immediate wrath are White, Asian, Hispanic/Latino and other immigrant gangster cliques.

## Farrakhan

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urging and pressure of the ADL for African-American leaders to reconsider their support of the Millions More Movement and the 10th anniversary of the Million Man March will do nothing more than increase the polarization of relations between millions of African American and Jewish Americans. It is a sad commentary that your actions will only help to spread anti-Semitism rather than help to end it."

As chairman of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding and the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, Russell Simmons had been singled out by the ADL despite his appearance in an ad deploring anti-Semitism.

"It's hypocritical for Mr. Simmons to lead a charge against anti-Semitism, while failing to denounce manifestations of anti-Jewish hatred within his own community."

In his letter to Foxman, Simmons was unapologetic: "Simply put, you are misguided, arrogant, and very disrespectful of African-Americans and, most importantly, your statements will unintentionally or intention-

ally lead to a negative impression of Jews in the minds of millions of African Americans," he wrote.

Replying to Simmons' reply, Foxman posted a statement on ADL's website accusing Simmons of advancing "some highly disturbing thoughts." He said Simmons "engages in a blame-the-victim tactic in which he claims that if I continue to criticize the roles of Farrakhan and Shabazz and call on Black leaders not to give them legitimacy, that I would be causing anti-Semitism."

Drawing on their own history of persecution, many Jews were active in the civil rights movement during the 1960s. However, as African-Americans demanded greater control of their struggle, pockets of tension developed, some that exist until this day.

A 2005 poll commissioned by ADL shows that 14 percent of Americans, nearly 35 million adults, hold "unquestionably anti-Semitic" views of Jews —down from 17 percent in 2002.

"The number of African-Americans with strong anti-Semitic beliefs continued to

remain high and stable since 1992," the ADL says. "The 2005 survey found that 36 percent of African-Americans hold strong anti-Semitic beliefs, four times more than the 9 percent for Whites." Foxman said in a statement, "We continue to remain troubled and somewhat at a loss to understand why African-Americans consistently have such strong anti-Semitic propensities."

In an interview with the NNPA News Service, Simmons says Foxman does not speak for all Jews.

"There are many, many, many voices with different opinions in the Jewish community," Simmons explains. "We don't want this to be a march of defiance. The basis of this operation is love and upliftment for the African-American community. We don't want to let anger be the reason we go to Washington," he explained.

For years, the ADL has tracked and catalogued what it describes as Farrakhan's anti-Semitism. Rev. Jesse Jackson's association with Farrakhan became a major issue during Jackson's 1984 bid for president, ultimately

leading to his disavowal of Farrakhan.

It became an issue for then-NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Chavis and Congressional Black Caucus Chair Kweisi Mfume when they included Farrakhan in a summit on Black America. And Foxman was the lead critic of the original Million Man March. Unlike 10 years ago, when Colin Powell, Bill Clinton, National Urban League President Hugh Price and many others were vocal critics of Farrakhan's leadership and views, this fall's march has already attracted Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and D.C. delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, among others.

Simmons says Farrakhan should be praised for what he did 10 years ago.

"When you keep demonizing Farrakhan in front of the Jewish community and you put him 'number one' on your list, that might be another way to raise money," Simmons says. "I like to take his notes that say no Muslim can hate a Jew. Why don't you take the high notes in his most recent speeches and sell those."

but we know who these individuals are.

"We've been silent. It's just like a man who bombed churches in the South [during the civil rights era]. He went home to family, a wife. She knew what he was up to. As a community, we need to no longer be enablers. We're going after those that don't want to get out. I've asked both Twin Cities police chiefs to increase and intensify their attempts to rid our community of gang-bangers.

"We can't sit by as so-called leaders and ignore these issues," said Terrill. "We can't tolerate it in our communities. People don't want to live in these neighborhoods because gang-bangers are creating fear for our seniors and our young people."

Sounding more akin to a "law and order" sheriff than a human rights watchdog, Terrill believes the excuses given for joining or participating in gang culture are just that, excuses, effects resulting from no causal basis or reason.

"No excuse to gang-bang. Don't tell me it's because youth summer programs have been cut, or that

poverty's the issue. Poverty has been with the Black community for a long time. To result in gang violence and the killing of our own, that can't be accepted. The June 1 ultimatum is my date for anyone who wants to help. I've asked police to intensify efforts to deal with it.

"Many times, I have hampered what they [police] do," Terrill said.

"A lady asked me how I'd feel if, after June 1, the police did something to my own son, but the greater chance is my son being hurt by another Black male than by a policeman. My son being harassed by police would be secondary to what could happen to

him on the street. There's a one in 19 chance that a Black man gets killed by another Black male," Terrill said of the fratricide that passes for normality in much of Black America.

"Families have to stand up first and foremost; the Black family must say to that child, 'I love you, but if you want to gang-bang, then you cannot come here.'"

Terrill said he's in favor of cracking down harder on violent offenders through the judicial system, including advocating for more non-recidivistic sentences for gang members, murderers, rapists, molesters, and other violent

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## Gang warning signs

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

St. Paul Human Rights Director Tyrone Terrill believes that there are 10 signs parents should look for that could mean "your child is a prime candidate to be a gang-banger or is involved in illegal activity." Terrill advises parents to be aware if and when these conditions exist:

- 1) your child has money that you did not give to him or her
- 2) your child has expensive jewelry that you didn't give him or her
- 3) If your child has truancy issues or bad grades at school
- 4) your child has expensive tennis shoes, sports jerseys, or anything you didn't buy them
- 5) your child has friends and you do not know their parents (know their family members' first and last names, the children's dates of birth, home address and telephone number)
- 6) your child is out past 10 pm any day of the week and not at work or attending an organized activity on a regular basis
- 7) your child's behavior changes, and he or she does not want you challenging him or her about wearing a certain color, or resists your wanting to check the clothes pockets, room, and other areas of the house for drugs, weapons, money, etc
- 8) your child's attitudes about school, place of worship or home responsibilities have changed to disrespectful behavior
- 9) your child says that his or her friends are in a gang or involved in illegal activity
- 10) your child is between 8- to 18-years-old in the inner city without a relationship of some kind with a man, woman or home leaders with a strong spiritual and religious base

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