

Aryan gang members like 'Polar Bear' now in custody

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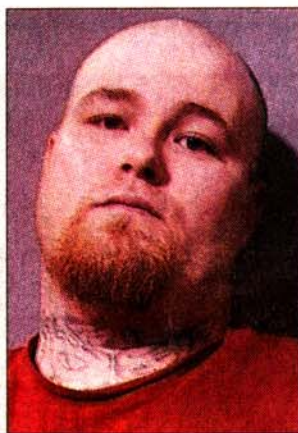
At 6-foot-3 inches tall and 300 pounds, Chad Ray Folmsbee looks every bit like his street name, Polar Bear.

So loyal to the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas, one of the state's most powerful criminal gangs, he named his daughter, Aryan Princess.

In U.S. District Court on Friday, federal agents contended that Folmsbee, 28, is a Houston lieutenant of the white-supremacy gang, riding herd over meetings, collecting dues, and tracking who is to be "smashed on sight" for breaking rules. His arrest for illegally possessing firearms is the latest in a 30-month probe of the prison-born gang across Texas.

During the investigation, which continues, at least 60 ranking officers have been charged at the federal or state levels in Houston, San Antonio, Austin, Beaumont and other parts of the state. Two generals have been captured and face murder and racketeering charges.

A third is in custody in North Texas — and perhaps headed back to prison — after leading authorities on a motorcycle chase last summer.



HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

HELD: Chad Ray Folmsbee's lawyer says he is a family man and only participates in a gang for protection in jail. Federal authorities contend he is a ruthless gang leader.

Magistrate Judge Stephen Smith ruled there were no conditions under which Folmsbee could be safely released pending trial.

He was arrested on the latest charges at a Conroe gun show after he supposedly bought four variants of the AK-47 and M-16 rifles, when it was illegal for him to possess firearms, as he is a felon.

The ATF had its eyes and its cameras on Folmsbee at the show as he made his way to a booth named, "Zombie Killers," and supposedly handed the vendor a wad of cash, then walked out with the guns.

He faces up to as many as 10 years in prison if con-

victed. His Harris County criminal record goes back at least a 10 years and includes drug possession and beating an ice cream man.

He joined the gang when he was sent to state prison as an 18-year-old, and climbed the ranks.

"He was a lieutenant in the streets," said Richard Boehning, a senior special agent with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

He described the gang, known as ABT, as having a para-military type structure and also requires membership and loyalty for life.

Boehning, who leads the task force investigating the Aryan Brotherhood, described members killed or maimed for disrespecting the gang, including a Dallas man whose hefty ABT tattoo, called a patch, was burned off his flesh.

Prosecutors on Friday played a tape of a secretly recorded September phone conversation in which Folmsbee calls his wife from jail. She gets on another phone with an Aryan Brotherhood acting general nicknamed Jive and relays messages back and forth so they can talk business and supposedly avoid being heard by law enforcement.

During the call, Folmsbee complains to the general that a fellow inmate he calls Youngster may be

misrepresenting himself as a gang member, not following rules and not adhering to the chain of command.

"Take Youngster in the back and slap him around a bit," says the general, according to his wife.

"Not a problem, I was already going to do that," Folmsbee responds. "10-4 good buddy."

Just a family man

Defense lawyer Daphne Pattison Silverman sought to portray Folmsbee as a caring family man who ran his own business, American Brothers Tattoos.

He's only involved in gang matters as a matter of protection when behind bars, she said.

"Out of jail, he is not going to participate in that organization," she said.

His white supremacist views, she said, are protected by the Constitution.

"Outside, he is only involved in separatism and supremacy," she said.

A family member testified that Folmsbee looks like a tough guy, but he's not dangerous.

"When I first looked at him, I thought, 'My God what did my daughter get herself into?'" said his mother in law, Claudia Goldman. "But after talking to him, I realized what was inside there was a big old teddy bear."

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