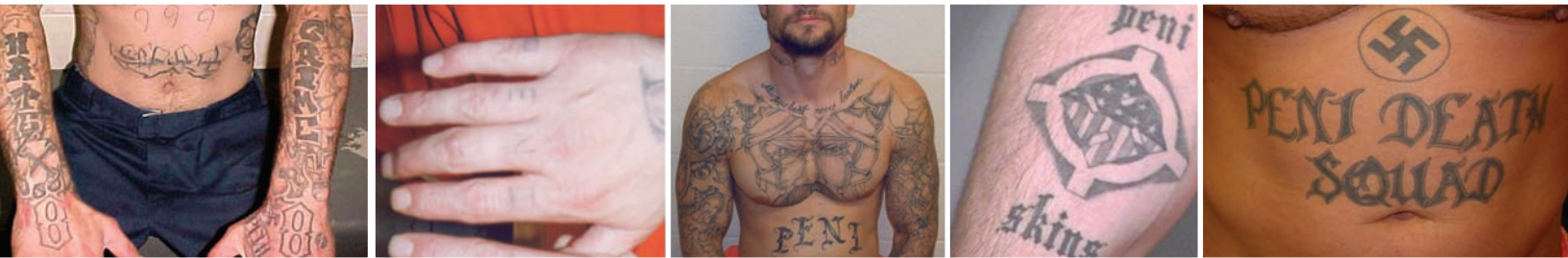


# PENI

PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER 1

CALIFORNIA'S GROWING RACIST GANG



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# PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Nearly 300 police officers from more than two dozen federal and local law enforcement agencies fanned out across Southern California on December 14, 2006, to execute a series of search and arrest warrants at some 75 different locations. The extensive sweep resulted in the arrest of 67 alleged members of the large and violent white supremacist gang known as Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI).

The raids capped a 10-month-long investigation into PENI led by the Anaheim Police Department that had already resulted in a number of PENI-related arrests in the week before the mid-December raids. Authorities took action after learning in November of an alleged PENI “hit list” that contained the names of an Orange County prosecutor and five police officers in several different departments. The suspects were arrested on a variety of charges, including conspiracy to commit murder, possession of illegal weapons and narcotics, forgery, probation violations and identity theft.

Across California, authorities struggle to deal with problems caused by PENI. An unusual hybrid of a racist skinhead gang, a street gang, and a prison gang, PENI has grown considerably in California, where it originated, and has even spread to nearby states.

California law enforcement and prison officials are increasingly faced with a wide range of problems caused by the organization, ranging from the illegal methamphetamine trade to white collar crime that includes identity theft and counterfeiting. In addition, PENI members have been convicted for violent crimes, including assaults, attempted murder and murder.

The group has also raised its profile in the California prison system, where incarcerated members attempt to gain more recruits and influence. PENI’s increasing strength stems to a large degree from its ability to position itself as a white power criminal organization capable of operating both on the streets and in the prison yards as foot soldiers for older, more established white supremacist prison gangs, such as the Aryan Brotherhood.

In the past several years, Public Enemy Number 1 has grown considerably in size. As it has expanded, so too has the threat that it poses. Heavily involved in the drug trade, PENI members also have a strong history of violence, both in the prisons and on the streets. Its mercenary and criminal nature, coupled with a white supremacist ideology and a subculture of violence, makes it a triple threat, both to law enforcement and to the public at large. Even people far removed from the worlds of narcotics and gangs may become victim to the PENI through white collar crimes ranging from fraud to counterfeiting to identity theft.

PENI is currently strongest in California, where it has caused many problems in recent years. However, if its growth is not stopped, it is likely to become increasingly problematic in other states as well—the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest being the most likely areas of PENI expansion. PENI may not be the nation’s “number one public enemy,” but they have more than proven themselves a violent, hateful and dangerous threat—one that needs to be contained.

# CALIFORNIA'S GROWING RACIST GANG

## PRISON ACTIVITIES

Unlike the more notorious Aryan Brotherhood (AB) and Nazi Low Riders (NLR), Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI) is not technically a prison gang according to California Department of Corrections guidelines. A prison gang is defined as a group that developed in prison and exists for the most part only behind bars, although it may in fact have counterparts on the outside. Prison gang members can automatically be assigned a Secure Housing Unit (SHU) sentence and segregated from the rest of the population; a regular inmate can only be sentenced to a SHU if he is a threat to institutional security or has been rigorously proven to be an associate of a prison gang (Donald Mazza, Nick Rizzo and Devlin Stringfellow, three top PENI leaders, were all given SHU sentences in this way). However, PENI members play an important role in California's prison gang structure, thanks in large part to the Aryan Brotherhood.

By the late 1970s, California prison officials attempted to limit the growing problem of the Aryan Brotherhood by subjecting it to increasingly closer scrutiny and locking its members in the SHU. In reaction, the AB reached out to NLR members to serve as middlemen for the Brotherhood's various criminal enterprises. At the same time, NLR filled a vacuum left by the AB by attracting white inmates who had previously turned to the AB for protection or who did not want to be documented as associates of prison gang members and confined in the SHU. The NLR's membership and criminal reputation grew tremendously after AB members were isolated in secure housing. However, in 1999, California prison authorities officially recognized NLR as a prison gang; as a result, members are now given automatic SHU sentences and segregated from the rest of the prison population. The NLR now suffered from many of the same limitations that the AB did.

During this period, an increasing number of NLR members dropped out of the gang and some joined PENI. Most known PENI members entering prison are placed initially in the "mainline" or general population, where they have relative freedom to congregating and associate with other inmates and can more easily conduct criminal business without being monitored as closely as validated prison gang members. Given the limitations placed on their members' movements, the AB and NLR were forced to forge alliances with smaller groups that could help them maintain their position in the drug trade. The Aryan Brotherhood, in particular, realized PENI's potential and inducted the group's members into its criminal operations both in and out of the prison, including drug trafficking (primarily the methamphetamine trade), property crimes, identity theft and murder. This was not without controversy; some NLR members were resentful that AB essentially gave the "keys" or control of the streets to PENI. In an unsuccessful attempt to be independent of AB, a few NLR members broke away and formed another group. Most NLR members, however, maintained their allegiance to Aryan Brotherhood. NLR members may work on an individual basis with PENI, but overall cooperation between the two groups has been limited.

# PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER 1

## EXPANDING RANKS

Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI) has grown steadily since the early 2000s. In 2003, the membership was estimated by law enforcement to be about 200; by 2005, the group had grown to 350-400 members documented by prison officials, although a substantial number of members and associates are unknown to authorities. Its total membership, including associates, could be as much as twice its documented membership.

PENI's growing clout in the prison system and control over criminal activities makes it attractive to some white inmates from the general population who seek protection from ethnic and criminal gangs and other prisoners. Some members of white supremacist street gangs join PENI while incarcerated, then resume an association with their own street gang after their release. Due to a shared ideology, PENI members can easily blend in with other white racist gangs. This kind of dual membership makes it difficult for law enforcement to assess PENI's size or attribute crimes to its members. However, because PENI members often "tier up," or cluster around one particular residence, which then becomes their main gathering place, it is easier for law enforcement to detect the group's presence in certain areas.

Individual PENI members have been documented throughout the country and even abroad. However, according to the California Department of Justice, approximately 300 of the group's documented members operate in southern and northern California. They appear to be most heavily concentrated in Orange County, where they are active in almost every city of the county, particularly in Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach and South Orange County. They also have a strong presence in the Inland Empire, especially in Riverside and San Bernardino and exist in smaller numbers in San Diego and Los Angeles counties.

PENI is less active in northern California, where it lacks strength in numbers, but according to law enforcement, it does have a presence in Sacramento, Redding and Shasta. More recently, the group has begun to recruit in Arizona, near Lake Havasu and Bullhead City. There are as of yet only a handful of documented PENI members in the Arizona prison system, however.

## STRUCTURE AND SYMBOLS

Unlike the Nazi Low Riders, Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI) has strong leadership but it is loosely structured. And in contrast to the Aryan Brotherhood and many other prison-based gangs, the group does not appear to have a written constitution, defined code of behavior, or clearinghouse for approved actions.

PENI's structure is largely based on personalities. Senior PENI members who are highly respected carry weight ("juice") within the organization and can decide on a course of action or who can join the organization. According to law enforcement, one ex-member cynically noted that the rules can change day to day depending on Donald Mazza's whims and self-serving interests.

# CALIFORNIA'S GROWING RACIST GANG

PENI claims to adhere strictly to a racist skinhead philosophy and ideology; however, in practice, the group's mercenary interests allow PENI members to associate at times with Asians and Hispanics while maintaining a strict "whites only" policy when it comes to membership. There are members with Hispanic-sounding surnames; however, they identify themselves as Caucasian. In addition, some members have non-white girlfriends, but the group generally frowns on such relationships.

PENI members routinely associate or spend time with other white racist gangs. Bars, biker clubs and white power concerts that attract a variety of other white power gangs will often also attract PENI members. Other racist skinhead groups such as the Orange County Skins and Insane White Boys can often be seen together with PENI at both informal and planned activities. Some years ago, PENI was a driving force in an unsuccessful attempt to unite with those gangs and others (including La Mirada Punks, Norwalk Skins, and Southern California Skinheads) into a unified group called the Southern California Skinhead Alliance. However, some other white gangs, such as the Sacromaniacs and Wolfpac, have clashed with PENI members whom they view as both criminals and gangsters.

PENI members often tattoo themselves with numbers or letters that refer to the group. Members may have tattoos that spell out Public Enemy Number 1 or simply their version of its initials, PENI. They may also refer to other terms or acronyms for the group, including Pen1, Peni Death Squad, PDS and Pen9. Peni Death Squad is just an alternate name for the group and does not signify the enforcers within the gang or a more violent sect within the organization. The number most commonly associated with the group is 737, which refers to the letters PDS on telephone touch pads: 7=P, 3=D, 7=S. Often these references appear among other racist and non-racist images, including common neo-Nazi tattoos, Viking imagery and Odinic symbols. Like many gang members, PENI tend to be heavily tattooed.

## KEY LEADERS

Donald Reed "Popeye" Mazza, Public Enemy Number 1's (PENI) "shot caller" or leader, has a violent criminal history, including drug use (he was a heavy heroin user) and an attempted murder conviction. In April 1999, according to prosecutors, only 10 hours after being released from prison, Mazza stabbed an associate, William Austin, while Dominic (Nick) "Droopy" Rizzo, the number two leader in PENI (and godfather to Austin's child), held Austin down. Austin was a member of the Los Angeles Death Squad, another white supremacist gang, and an active participant in PENI and NLR activities. Austin was said to have been attacked in this "prison-ordered hit" because fellow gang members believed that he was working with law enforcement as an informant. According to prosecutors, an Aryan Brotherhood member is believed to have overseen the attack.

In 2003, Mazza was convicted of attempted murder and is currently serving 15 years in state custody at Pelican Bay, a high security state prison for hardcore gang members. In the summer of 2005, Mazza reportedly earned his Aryan Brotherhood "dancing shoes," which means that he was inducted into the AB ranks. He has now been validated by prison officials as an AB associate. Mazza's new membership in AB is likely to boost PENI's position and power in California's prison system.

# PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER 1

Dominic Peter “Droopy” Rizzo was given a life sentence for his attempted murder conviction and is locked up at West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga. Prior to the conviction, Rizzo had been released from the Santa Ana Orange County Jail on July 17, 2002, on a \$500,000 bond paid with a cashier’s check, which later turned out to be bogus. His use of a forged document is not uncommon for PENI members, who are often involved in counterfeit schemes and identity theft.

In November 2003, while being transported, Rizzo slashed the neck of another inmate, a convicted child molester, with whom he was shackled in line. Rizzo pleaded guilty on July 17, 2006, to assault with a deadly weapon; his sentence was added to the life term he was already serving for the attempted murder of Austin. Prison personnel have since validated Rizzo as an AB associate.

Another key player in the PENI leadership is Devlin “Gazoo” Stringfellow, whose mother married Reuben Pappan, a significant Aryan Brotherhood member convicted in 2003 of conspiracy to commit murder. She later allegedly divorced Pappan so that her son could spend his parole at her home and not violate his terms of probation for affiliating with other gang members.

## FEMALE MEMBERS

With many of the male members of Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI) locked up, its female members and associates often become the “worker bees” of the group. Women are given monikers and may participate in criminal activity. In fact, according to law enforcement, some within PENI view it as preferable for female members to carry out certain criminal activities precisely because they can better hide their affiliation with PENI and blend in more easily with the general population. In contrast with male PENI members, women often have tattoos that are hidden or small in size and do not adhere to a specific manner of dress or hairstyle.

Women are expected to provide income to the gang, often through menial jobs, and to rent apartments for gang members to help them hide from authorities when needed. Some have served as drug couriers; others have worked at or have applied for jobs that might help gang-related activities, such as at a bail bond business or pharmacy, or as non-sworn law-enforcement personnel.

Key female members of the group can be crucial in facilitating PENI activities, especially by acting as links for incarcerated PENI members to the outside world by keeping up contacts outside of prison. Women play a key role in helping jailed PENI members circumvent restrictions on prisoners’ telephone and written communications in a variety of ways, including facilitating three-way calling between members in prison to third parties, coordinating conference calls between inmates and gang members on the street, receiving collect calls from an inmate, using “call forwarding” to transfer the call to another individual, and helping inmates communicate with each other using mail dumps. Additionally, a female gang member may conceal the true source of a letter by various means, such as giving it the appearance of a legal document sent by an attorney.

# CALIFORNIA'S GROWING RACIST GANG

Women also raise money to place on the inmates' prison "books." Inmates are allowed access to this money to use in prison convenience stores (male PENI members will also sometimes do this for incarcerated members). One PENI associate, in a 2001 television interview, described her caretaking and support role for PENI members as being akin to a "den mother." Simone Lawrence, another PENI associate, was convicted in March 2006 of committing identity theft for the sake of benefiting PENI.

The status of individual women within PENI is typically based on their male partner's position within the organization. For example, the wives of PENI's key leaders are considered to have the highest status level, which grants them respect, protection and monetary provisions. Nonetheless, PENI does not officially induct women into the organization nor can women hold leadership positions.

Law enforcement authorities have warned that even though the number of arrests of female members is small, women can be just as dangerous and criminally active as male members. For example, one woman, Monica "Mouth" Witak, was convicted of witness intimidation in association with PENI. While housed at the Orange County Jail, Witak wrote a letter to a PENI member in another prison facility, requesting an assault against an individual who witnessed her cellmate's murder case. Witak received a five-year sentence for the incident. Another woman, Kim Arrighi Fanelli, Nick Rizzo's sister-in-law, was convicted of possession of a shotgun and pseudo-ephedrine to make methamphetamines and sentenced to five years.

## DRUG TRADE INVOLVEMENT AND VIOLENT CRIMES

Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI) members have sometimes been given the nickname "needle Nazis," due to their heavy drug usage and racist ideology. Because of their involvement with illegal drugs, both as users and sellers, many of their encounters with law enforcement on the streets revolve around drugs. On March 16, 2006, for example, law enforcement officials from various agencies in Orange County arrested 23 suspected members leaders and associates of PENI who were allegedly involved in drug sales, identity theft and other crimes. All the suspects had criminal records and more than half of those arrested were women. Most of the suspects were arrested on parole and probation violations. Officials also confiscated 12 weapons and recovered small amounts of heroin and methamphetamine from the gang.

Like the AB and the NLR, PENI members often have working relationships with Hispanic street gangs and non-white prison gangs such as the Mexican Mafia, due to a shared interest in criminal activity, particularly the drug trade. Even though PENI sells methamphetamine and, to a lesser extent, other drugs, it is not involved in the production of drugs. PENI members get most of their drugs from other illegal manufacturers; in some cases they may also "tax" or steal from other drug users and their associates. PENI members also use drugs as a means to entice and recruit others into the organization. They have sometimes allegedly supplied addicts with drugs, eventually coercing them, through force and intimidation, to commit crimes for the gang.

PENI members are also active in bringing drugs into the prison system, often through novel means. In August 2004, drugs were allegedly introduced into a Southern California prison by PENI members

# PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER 1

through dirty diapers brought into the facility by a member of an outside landscaping crew.

PENI members have managed to find ways to organize around the drug trade both in and out of prison. For example, law enforcement officers recently discovered that there are a few sober living homes or half-way homes in Orange County that have a reputation for being "PENI friendly." Some employees of the homes allegedly turn a blind eye, permit or, in some cases, may even be involved with drug sales and other criminal activity. PENI members have reportedly been able to take advantage of the fact that there is little licensing or regulation of these homes by government agencies, making them potentially easier targets for criminal activity.

## VIOLENT CRIMES

In addition to drug-related criminal activity, PENI members have committed a number of violent crimes, including assault, murder and attempted murder. In 2003, for example, PENI member Chad Studebaker, involved in a traffic altercation in Orange County, ran the victim's car off the road, sliced his neck with a knife, and yanked a Star of David hanging from the victim's neck. Studebaker then fled to a PENI safe home in Riverside County before being arrested; he was later convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to 21 years to life in prison.

A more gruesome incident occurred in April 2004, when a group of PENI attacked a 26-year-old Laguna Nigel resident because they thought he had stolen \$12,000 from a stripper and PENI associate. Although they apparently intended only to torture him to extract a confession and the location of the money, their brutal attack with blows from a claw hammer to his skull killed the victim. Police arrested nine members and associates of PENI on various charges in connection with the slaying, including PENI leader Billy Joe Johnson of Huntington Beach and Jason Karr of Costa Mesa. In June 2006, Johnson pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 45 years to life; six other defendants also pleaded guilty and received lesser sentences. A mistrial was declared in October 2006 in the trial of the two remaining defendants when a juror used an Internet search engine to research Johnson; they will have to be retried.

Authorities believe PENI members may also have been behind other unsolved murders that involved punishing members believed to have betrayed the group's trust. Orange County law enforcement officers discovered the dead body of Scott Miller, a PENI member, in an alley behind a housing complex in March 2002. Authorities suspect Miller had been punished for participating in a revealing television interview about PENI in February 2001 and because other PENI members suspected he was stealing drug money from the gang.

Similarly, in June 2002, Lake Elsinore police discovered the severely beaten body of an 18-year-old girl stuffed into a 55-gallon drum in an open field. The men charged with her murder, Jeffree Buettner and Glen Joseph Jones, were reportedly PENI gang members who allegedly believed the victim had been talking to law enforcement. They still await trial.

# CALIFORNIA'S GROWING RACIST GANG

PENI members have also committed violent crimes in prison. Like other white supremacist prison gangs, PENI follows certain codes of behavior. The members will “take care of their own,” meaning white prisoners, but will kill white sex offenders, who are considered unworthy of being white. The inmate whose throat Dominic Rizzo slit in 2003, for example, was a known sex offender.

## OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

In recent years, Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI) members, like those of some other racist prison gangs, have become increasingly involved in white collar crime, including computer fraud, credit card fraud, counterfeiting and identity theft. PENI members sometimes solicit friends, relatives and associates who have access to personal records to steal that private data from institutions where they work, including banks, mortgage businesses, dental offices, hospitals or even the Department of Motor Vehicles. PENI members will also engage in stealing personal data via auto burglary, mail theft, purse snatching and trash diving. They can provide this data to people who can use it to create false identities. Documents that have been replicated have included drivers' licenses, bank statements, Social Security cards, notarized documents, duplicate checks and even W-2 forms, as well as counterfeit money.

In one case, PENI member Brian “Bullet” Mitchell was arrested for making counterfeit \$50 bills by bleaching lower denomination currency with oven cleaner spray and running the paper through a color printer. He was later convicted of having equipment for the purpose of counterfeiting money for the benefit of financing the prison accounts of PENI members. In another case, law enforcement confiscated the computer of a PENI associate and found a laundry list of types of documents that could be falsified for a specified price.

Identity theft and stolen information have also been used by PENI members for their own personal pleasure. There have been reports of PENI members using stolen credit cards to check into hotels and hold parties. Law enforcement was only alerted when a security risk emerged at the hotel, such as PENI “guests” refusing to leave at the hotel’s check-out time or stolen credit cards setting off an alert. In another case, a group of PENI members were kicked out of a hotel before check-out. They later received a refund check from the hotel. They allegedly took the check and made duplicates of it numerous times, cashing them in various drugstores.

## TARGETING LAW ENFORCEMENT

As the criminal investigation into a possible Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI) hit list of officers and prosecutors in Southern California suggests, PENI members can pose officer safety threats to law enforcement.

PENI members caught in criminal activity have a history of fleeing on foot and in their vehicles and have displayed aggressive and violent resistance to arrests by law enforcement. Like members of other drug-using criminal street gangs, PENI members can be unstable, irrational and unpredictable. In addition, many members have become habitual offenders, and may become combative to prevent re-arrest and

# PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER 1

lengthy incarceration under the “three strikes” law in California.

According to law enforcement sources, PENI members have also attempted to use a range of weapons against officers, including handguns, sawed-off shotguns, revolvers, semi-automatics and rifles. In one case, a vehicle was used as a weapon. On May 13, 2003, a PENI member wanted for a parole violation fled on foot when a California Highway Patrol officer attempted to stop his vehicle. The officer pursued the gang member, who allegedly doubled back to his vehicle, placed the car in reverse, struck the officer with the car door and knocked him to the ground. The suspect’s car also injured the officer’s canine. The suspect was arrested five days later at a local park.

In a February 2001 televised interview, PENI member Scotty “Scottish” Miller boasted that PENI members listen to police scanners, which allows them eventually to recognize officers by their voices, radio call signs and work shifts. He also bragged about owning “over 300 guns.” California records revealed that Miller had no firearms registered to him. Since many PENI members have felony records, they must purchase their weapons illegally on the street or steal them during residential burglaries.

## ORIGINS

Public Enemy Number 1’s (PENI) original membership consisted largely of white, middle-class youths active in the punk music subculture popular in southern California in the mid-1980s. In fact, the name of the group comes from the 1980’s British punk band *Rudimentary Peni* (there is no other connection between the band and the gang).

Music venues offered a variety of alternative music that appealed to both racist and non-racist skinheads, and some featured explicitly white power bands. People came from a wide geographic area, including Long Beach and the Inland Empire, to hear the music, drink, meet, network and form groups. A number of white street gangs emerged from this scene, including, among others, PENI, Los Angeles Death Squad, Norwalk Skins and Orange County (OC) Skins.

PENI began as a white power gang, but without a single clear purpose or orientation. Almost from the outset, PENI was divided into two camps—one faction emphasized maintaining an ideologically oriented white power organization while the other faction championed carrying out more criminal activities. Brody Davis, an influential member of PENI’s original cadre, allegedly encouraged members to follow a more traditional path of promoting white power and racist skinhead ideology and to reject drug use and criminal activity. Initially, the group followed this path and members distributed leaflets that promoted white supremacy while also engaging in typical skinhead activities like heavy drinking and fighting.

# CALIFORNIA'S GROWING RACIST GANG

However, another PENI leader, Donald Reed "Popeye" Mazza, reportedly used his own influence to steer the group in a different direction and as Davis's leadership position waned, many of the disenfranchised white youths in PENI turned to drugs. By the late 1980s, PENI's activities resembled those of other criminally active gangs. The drug habits of Mazza and other PENI members drove a shift towards drug trafficking and crime to support the habits. To this day, drug use remains prevalent among PENI members.

PENI's membership gradually increased as it expanded geographically from Long Beach to Orange County and expanded its criminal enterprises from drug distribution to also include auto theft, burglary, property crime, witness intimidation and identity theft. This in turn led to an increased PENI presence in California's prison system. Prison-based PENI members used the prisons as sources of recruitment, and PENI began to grow behind bars.

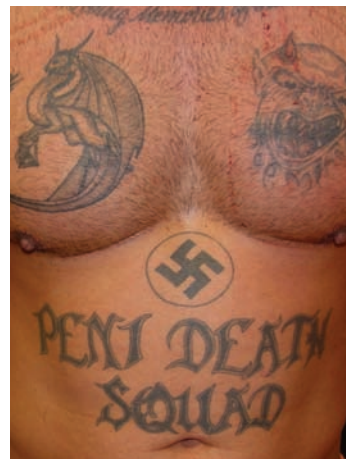
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# PENI

COMMON SYMBOLS





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