

Hells Angels Drug Smuggling Ring Busted in Ferndale, Washington

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On June 6, 2008, agents and police from US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Washington State Patrol, Bellingham Police Department, and Snohomish County Sheriff's Office concluded a 3 year drug smuggling investigation by arresting 2 Hells Angels operatives at a Bob's Burger & Brew in Ferndale, Washington. During the 3 year investigation, upwards of 1,500 pounds of cocaine, 7,000 pounds of highly sought "BC bud" marijuana, and 3.5 million dollars were seized. The 2 men arrested in the takedown, both Canadian citizens and known high level operatives for the Hells Angels outlaw motorcycle gang (OMG), were arrested on completion of their final transaction with the law enforcement investigators. Several hundred more pounds of BC bud and \$50,000 in cash were also seized that day.

The Canadian men, Robert J. Shannon, 38, of Maple Ridge, British Columbia, and Devron D. Quast, 38, of Abbotsford, British Columbia, are believed to be key figures in the narcotics smuggling ring that relied on a variety of smuggling methods which included using hollowed out logs, PVC pipes, hidden compartments in false walls of modified commercial truck trailers, modified propane tanker trucks, loads of lumber and beauty bark, and a variety of other ruses to move the narcotics from British Columbia, through the US border and into the awaiting hands of lower level dealers in Washington State and across the United States, to as far away as New York.

According to federal indictments, Shannon, oversaw smuggling and distribution of the narcotics for the Hells Angels and Quast was responsible for the day-to-day transportation of the drugs. Allegedly, Quast, the general manager for the Abbotsford Hyundai car dealership, even provided "insurance" for buyers by agreeing to pay \$425 per pound of marijuana seized by law enforcement or otherwise "lost" in transit. Although both men are believed to be high level Hells Angels associates, neither man is known to be an actual Hells Angels member. According to federal indictments, 38 additional persons from British Columbia, Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties have been indicted as well.

Old news? Yes, but interesting nonetheless. This story has been reported in nearly every mainstream news source in the United States, Washington,

and on the internet. It's also been reported at length by every "biker" news source around the globe,....with the exception of *the* area in which the narcotics actually entered the US, were stored, and the transactions were alleged to have occurred....Whatcom County, Washington. The unwritten aspect of this story is what seems to be most intriguing. Why? Before June 6, it was speculated by only a few in local law enforcement that the Hells Angels were routinely conducting "business" in and around Whatcom County, Washington, specifically the Ferndale area.

What makes this interesting you ask? Whatcom County is a border county, of a border state, in a known high drug/contraband smuggling area. Ferndale is a small town known for being rich with American pride and pioneer ruggedness. This old settler spirit, which is alive and well in it's mostly traditional rural folks, can be seen every year around this time in it's Old Settler's festivities. It's also known for being a local hangout for the Bandidos outlaw motorcycle gang and its affiliate local "farm clubs", the Amigos, Canyon Riders and Destralos OMG's, all of whom are known to frequent the local taverns and eateries of Ferndale.

Just over the border, about 10 miles north of Ferndale, British Columbia, Canada is known to be a Hells Angels stronghold. Hells Angels BC are deeply embedded with a serious organized crime infrastructure encompassing nearly every facet of crime, which is believed to have surpassed traditional Italian organized crime many years ago with an estimated 1 billion dollar per year crime network for BC alone. Yet, a set of Hells Angels cuts are never seen in or around Ferndale, or anywhere else in Whatcom County for that matter, unless they happen to be on a patched member transiting the area to or from Canada. Bandido's members and their affiliates are routinely seen in and around Ferndale.

The Hells Angels and the Bandidos 1%'er outlaw motorcycle gangs, both of US origins and based out of California and Texas respectively. They are the two largest OMG's in the world, each with a plethora of chapters on nearly every continent. They are also allegedly bitter rivals, as is the case with most every other outlaw motorcycle gang when it comes to the Hells Angels. How is it that an allegedly competing OMG operated in and around Ferndale and Whatcom County, for at least 3 years according to the recent June 6th investigation, without being detected by their arch rivals the Bandidos? Were the Bandido's even aware of this? Is it possible that the two "clubs" were somehow cooperating in a mutual "business" venture? No patched Hells Angels or Bandidos were reported to have been indicted and none were reported to have been directly connected to this investigation, which is not surprising and typical of the way organized crime outfits like this operate.

Also of interest, aside from the Bellingham Police Department, no other

Whatcom County law enforcement agencies or personnel were reported to have been involved in this 3 year investigation. Seems odd, no? Why? The reasons aren't clear and haven't been openly stated by any agency concerned as of yet. How is it that nearly every federal agency, the Washington State Patrol, Bellingham Police, and *Snohomish* County's Sheriff's Office were involved,...but not Ferndale Police or Whatcom County's Sheriff's Office? How was Snohomish County's Sheriff's Office involved, but not Whatcom County's Sheriff's Office? At first glance, this seems highly irregular and worthy of further investigation. Published reports have been thoroughly researched, but the official reasoning has not been found and is not yet determined.

WC...*U* will attempt to find reasons for this as this story develops.