

# Understanding the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs

*Volume II*



# Understanding the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs

*International Perspectives*

*Volume II*

Edited by

Mark Lauchs

Andy Bain



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*For Aly, Mikey, Corrie & Ryan with Love  
Daddy*

*To friends and family  
Mark*



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# Foreword

*Understanding the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, Volume II*, is an important contribution to scholarly works building on our emerging and evolving understanding and appreciation of this complex serious and organised crime group. The research conducted by Bain and Lauchs, and which was presented in Volume 1, provides context and insights into the activities of OMCGs. It was an early exploration of this phenomenon and a very good baseline from which to launch the research for Volume II.

*Understanding the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, Volume II*, traverses key areas of enquiry incorporating a historical perspective of outlaw motorcycle gangs, where they operate in society and why they continue to thrive, to set the scene. The contributions from all the authors in Volume II provide a good account of the emergence, development, and operation of OMCGs in the countries explored in the book. Volume II considers the differences between OMCGs and motorcycle clubs and, as discussed in chapters 1 and 8, why people move from rider to club member to gang member and outlaw.

In chapters 1 and 8, the book demonstrates similarities and differences between various OMCGs from a hierarchical perspective and the interplay between Dominant Clubs, Outlaw Clubs, Support Clubs, Independent Clubs and Solo riders. Importantly, the book describes the distinction between motorcycle clubs and outlaw motorcycle gangs and examines the differences in the context of motivations of individuals to join an OMCG, asking questions about why some choose to join an OMCG. The distinction between clubs and gangs is an important one when viewed through the lens of deviance and criminality and the pure pleasure of riding a motorcycle with a group of like-minded individuals who have no intention or desire to engage in deviant or criminal behaviour.

Through the various chapters, authors have hypothesised about the attraction to join a gang through a desire to be part of a militaristic framework, brotherhood or to live the life of a road warrior. They have explored relationships and rules within these distinct groups and some of the issues around joining and attempting to leave an OMCG. They have explored the impacts and influences OMCGs have in and on local communities and the approaches taken

in policing outlaw motorcycle gangs and disrupting their activities. Chapters 2 and 3 highlight that while OMCGs and their memberships are powerful groups in local communities, we know little about them.

The book presents, in a powerful way, perspectives on OMCGs from the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Russia and Scandinavia as well as the Caribbean, Africa and the Far East. It provides analysis and discussion of OMCGs including research about their emergence, culture, makeup and about individuals who are drawn to these organisations. It, very usefully, describes their activities in a broad range of countries including Turkey, the Middle East, Lebanon and others which gives insights into the expansion of some OMCGs and the purpose in establishing a presence, through charters/chapters, in other countries.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 explore different approaches to policy settings intended to limit the ability of OMCGs to commit crime in an organised and systematic way. Contributions seek to distinguish between criminal and non-criminal groups and to policing interventions in the context of criminal groups. Developing this theme, the distinction between criminality and activities that are not criminal is explored. In this context, the authors question our ability or inability to effectively identify a criminal group or a non-criminal one and to delineate between members who commit criminal offences and those who do not. It examines whether all members are criminal through offence or association simply by virtue of their membership of the OMCG.

The conclusion of Volume II looks at the future of the OMCG and makes some predictions about effective ways for policing agencies around the world to deal with the organised criminality and violence of outlaw gangs. Legislation has been used in many countries to give police specific powers in respect of that criminality and violence and the authors of the book described its application in various locations. Contributions note that these gangs are a much broader sociological enterprise than just their participation in crime, that the concept of turf is blurred and, in some cases, OMCGs do not claim territory. Why this is the case is less clear and further research will help in understanding the drivers for and reasons behind some of the choices. The conclusion does provide case studies in relation to the movement of OMCGs to locations where association laws are less hostile, making it easier for them to gain a foothold and develop a base for their activities. The conclusion suggests the need for significant further research into OMCGs on the basis that our understanding of them remains limited.

Government agencies, particularly those in policing and criminal intelligence, conduct intelligence probes into the activities of OMCGs and their role in trafficking drugs and firearms; in fraud and money laundering; violence; and cor-

ruption. Policing agencies conduct investigations into crimes committed by OMCG members, but there is comparatively little exploration in the academic domain about these issues. Other official studies into OMCGs have focussed on the concepts of affiliation and disaffiliation of members with outlaw motorcycle gangs and on prevention and intervention opportunities governments, through policy settings and police through direct action, may take. Questions arise as to the effectiveness of association laws in reducing or preventing criminal activity or behaviours by OMCG members. Research has helped develop an understanding of the culture of outlaw motorcycle gangs; the reality of joining one; and whether being a member of an OMCG meets the expectations of the individual joining it. It has also considered the nature of the hold these organisations have in circumstances where a member seeks to leave it and the consequences if a member tries to leave. The fact that we know little about what draws people to join OMCGs is a fertile area for future research.

The global reach of OMCGs and their engagement with similar groups in other countries forms the basis of intelligence collection and analysis on a need's basis, in other words, to answer specific questions in law enforcement and to a lesser degree in national security. In much the same way as other forms of serious and organised crime, the links between OMCGs and other actors have been identified by government agencies. That research, if shared with the broader community and the academic community, is filtered, manipulated and redacted so as to meet the needs for which the data was collected and analysed. It may provide useful questions and insights for further academic research, but it will likely not answer questions posed in the social sciences about the impact of OMCGs on the community.

As discussed in chapter 2, more research is needed to shed light on this group including their infiltration into sensitive and vulnerable environments and their influence across and within the sectors in which they operate. Arguably, significant opportunity exists for a greater collaboration and alignment of thinking on research and deeper engagement between government and academe to explore this group with a view to enhancing our knowledge and understanding of their methods and motivations.

As a corollary, some argue that outlaw motorcycle gangs are a discrete group of actors in the serious and organised crime landscape, both nationally and internationally, while others suggest there is little evidence that outlaw motorcycle gangs act as criminal organisations. This extreme divergence of views screams out for more research at the academic level, because the gap in thinking and understanding is clearly stark. It could be said that OMCGs are complex crime groups that requires much more exploration from both government and

academe to expand and enhance our knowledge of their structures, activities, relationships, engagements, and impacts, wherever they operate.

So, where are the gaps in our knowledge about OMCGs that are yet to be researched, or that have been identified and explored to some degree in *Understanding the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs: International Perspectives, Volume II* but would benefit from deeper and more sustained examination? What are the important areas of untapped or lightly touched research that, unless undertaken by the academic community, will likely remain untapped?

It is likely that scholarly examination of gang's structures, activities and impacts, and particularly around gaps in our knowledge of most aspects of their operations is not only needed but would be valuable in expanding our knowledge of these groups.

I commend this edition of *Understanding the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, Volume II* to you.

Dr. Phil Kowalick  
President, Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers  
& Adjunct Professor, Queensland University of Technology



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We would like to thank our colleagues at Carolina Academic Press for giving us the opportunity to continue this extremely important work. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the wonderful Beth Hall, who kept the faith, and calmly worked with us through many unforeseen delays. No one could have foreseen the turn of events that has befallen us all through the global pandemic, but still the work continued, and your guidance and support was invaluable as always. In addition, this book would not be possible without each of the contributors who have generously provided their valuable research and professional expertise, to create the individual chapters. Your stoicism and work ethic during the back and forward of the writing and editing is greatly appreciated and we hope that we have built strong relationships for collaboration in the future.



# Notes on the Contributors

## Editors

### Mark Lauchs

**Dr. Mark Lauchs** is an associate professor at Queensland University of Technology, in Australia. He joined the university after 17 years working in policy and research positions in the Queensland state government. He is coordinator of the Policy and Governance Graduate Certificate in the School of Justice. Dr. Lauchs also taught in the International Policing program of the bachelor of justice degree delivered to the Singapore Police. Dr. Lauchs has published extensively on police corruption, organized crime, and social network analysis. He is co-author of *Policing Transnational Organized Crime and Corruption: Exploring the Role of Communication Interception Technology*.

### Andy Bain

**Dr. Andy Bain** is associate professor of criminal justice at the University of Mount Union, Ohio, USA. He joined the university in 2013 and became the first of director of Criminal Justice Studies in 2016. Prior to joining the university Dr. Bain was employed at the University of Portsmouth, UK, as the course leader for Criminology with Psychology. His professional background includes four years with the National Probation Service (in England and Wales) and more than a decade running a successful criminal justice consultancy group, providing guidance and advice to offender groups, law enforcement agencies, and correctional bodies, through which he has authored a number of local and national policing and corrections reports and has most recently acted as an expert consultant to the U.S. Navy. He is an active member of national and international professional bodies, and has research interests in tattoo and culture, gangs and coded language, policing and social groups, social-psychology of offending and risk-taking behavior, and the (psychological) investigation of criminal behavior.

Andy has been researching gangs and behavior for the last 10 years, which has led to numerous publications and recognition of his work. He has provided chapters on gangs in the Caribbean and deviance and the OMCG. He is the co-editor of the first volume of *Understanding the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs: International Perspectives* (with Dr. Mark Lauchs). He is the co-author of *Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs: A Theoretical Perspective* (with Dr. Mark Lauchs & Dr. Peter Bell). He also acted as editor and contributor for the text *Law Enforcement and Technology: Understanding the Use of Technology for Policing* and the co-author of *Professional Risk Taking with People: A Guide to Decision-Making in Health, Social Care & Criminal Justice* (with Mr. David Carson). In addition, Andy has published in a number of leading international academic and professional journals and is a member of the National Gang Crime Research Center.

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### **Amanda Juhasz**

**Ms. Amanda Juhasz** is a tactical crime and intelligence analyst with the Calgary Police Service in Alberta, Canada. She began her career working in offender management, first in high-risk offender re-integration and then as a probation officer in British Columbia, Canada. She obtained her bachelor of arts in sociology from the University of British Columbia in 2014, and in 2016/2017 she attended Royal Roads University, where she completed a graduate diploma in conflict analysis and management. She obtained her MA in criminology and criminal justice in 2019 from the University of the Fraser Valley, authoring a thesis on the subject of youth gang intervention strategies. In her current role with the Calgary Police Service, Amanda enjoys combining her professional and academic experience to support frontline policing.

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Dr. Keiron McConnell holds a doctoral degree in policing, security and community safety from Metropolitan London University, a master's of science degree in policing and public order studies from the University of Leicester, a bachelor of general studies degree from the Open University of British Columbia, a diploma in police leadership from Dalhousie University and a certificate in public sector leadership from Royal Roads University. This academic achievement comes with 29 years of operational experience, with the last 15 years exclusively in gang suppression with a variety of police gang units. Keiron has provided consulting services to organizations that included the Royal Saudi Arabian Police and the People's Republic of China Police. He has instructed at the JIBC-Police Academy for three years in professional patrol tactics and continues as a guest lecturer. In addition, he is a faculty member at Kwantlen Polytechnic University where he teaches Organized Crime. He is a regular guest instructor for the policing program at Simon Fraser University and is the author of the textbook *Legal and Regulatory Influences for Public Safety Communications*.

**Carter F. Smith**

Dr. Carter Smith is the graduate coordinator for the Department of Criminal Justice Administration at Middle Tennessee State University, in Murfreesboro, TN. As a U.S. Army CID Special Agent, Carter was involved in military and federal law enforcement for over twenty years and identified the growing gang problem in the early 1990s, later helping start the Army's first gang and extremist investigations team at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Carter received a Ph.D. from Northcentral University after completing his dissertation on perceptions regarding military-trained gang members. He received a law degree from Southern Illinois University.

Carter has provided training on gangs and their impact on the community to many gatherings and conferences, including those sponsored by the Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Mid-Atlantic, Mississippi, North Carolina, Northwest, Oklahoma, Southern California, Southern Nevada, and Tennessee Gang Investigators Associations, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, the National Crime Prevention Council, the Regional Organized Crime Information Center, the National Gang Crime Research Center, the Southern Criminal Justice Association, the Department of Justice and the U.S. Army.

He has written many articles, consulted with several media outlets, written two textbooks on gangs, and has appeared twice in the History Channel's *Gangland* series. He was a founding (and still serving) board member of the Tennessee Gang Investigators Association, a recipient of the Army CID Command Special Agent of the Year award and is a three-time recipient of the

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