[Template:Pp-semi-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-indef" \o "Template:Pp-semi-indef) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Refimprove](/wiki/Template:Refimprove) [Template:Infobox Criminal organization](/wiki/Template:Infobox_Criminal_organization) The **Crips** are a primarily [African-American](/wiki/African-American) [gang](/wiki/Gang). They were founded in [Los Angeles, California](/wiki/Los_Angeles,_California) in 1969 mainly by [Raymond Washington](/wiki/Raymond_Washington) and [Stanley Williams](/wiki/Stanley_Williams). What was once a single alliance between two autonomous gangs is now a loosely connected network of individual *sets*, often engaged in open warfare with one another. Its members traditionally wear blue clothing, a practice that has waned somewhat due to police crackdowns on gang members.

The Crips are one of the largest and most violent associations of street gangs in the United States,<ref name=US1>U.S. Department of Justice, *Crips*.</ref> with an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 members. It has been involved in murders, robberies and drug dealing, among other crimes.

Crips have a long and bitter rivalry with the [Bloods](/wiki/Bloods). Crips have served in the [United States armed forces](/wiki/United_States_armed_forces) and on bases in the United States and abroad.[[1]](#cite_note-1)

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Stanley Tookie Williams](/wiki/Stanley_Tookie_Williams) met [Raymond Lee Washington](/wiki/Raymond_Lee_Washington) in 1969, and the two decided to unite their local gang members from the west and east sides of [South Central Los Angeles](/wiki/South_Central_Los_Angeles) in order to battle neighboring street gangs. Most of the members were 17 years old.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Williams discounted the sometimes cited founding date of 1969 in his memoir, *Blue Rage, Black Redemption*.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Gang activity in South Central Los Angeles has its roots in a variety of factors dating back to the 1950s and '60s, including post-World War II economic decline leading to joblessness and poverty, racial segregation leading to the formation of black "street clubs" by young [African American](/wiki/African_American) men who were excluded from organizations such as the [Boy Scouts](/wiki/Boy_Scout), and the waning of [black nationalist](/wiki/Black_nationalist) organizations such as the [Black Panther Party](/wiki/Black_Panther_Party) and the [Black Power Movement](/wiki/Black_Power_Movement).[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) By 1978, there were 45 Crips gangs, called sets, operating in Los Angeles. They were heavily involved in the production of PCP, marijuana and amphetamines. On March 11, 1979, Stanley Tookie Williams, a member of Westside Crips was arrested for four murders and then on August 8, 1979, Raymond Washington was gunned down. Washington had been against Crip infighting and after his death several Crip sets started fighting against each other. The Crips leadership was dismantled prompting a deadly gang war between the Rollin' 60 Neighborhood Crips and Eight Tray Gangster Crips which began causing nearby Crip sets to choose sides and align themselves with either the Gangster Crips or Neighborhood Crips waging an all out war in South Central and other cities. The East Coast Crips and the Hoover Crips directly severed their alliance after Washington's death. By 1980 the Crips were in turmoil, warring with the Bloods and against each other. The growth and power of the gang really took off in the early 1980s when [crack cocaine](/wiki/Crack_cocaine) hit the streets. In the early 1980s Crips sets began distributing crack cocaine in Los Angeles. The huge profits from distribution of crack cocaine induced many Crips to establish new markets in other cities and states. As a result, Crip membership grew steadily and by late 1980s it was the one of the largest street-gangs in the country.[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8) In 1999, there were at least 600 Crips sets with more than 30,000 members transporting drugs in the United States.<ref name=US1/>

### Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

The original name for the alliance was "Cribs", a name narrowed down from a list of many options, and chosen unanimously from three final choices, which included the Black Overlords, and the Assassins. Cribs was chosen to reflect the young age of the majority of the gang members. The name "Cribs" evolved into the name "Crips" when gang members began carrying around canes to display their "[pimp](/wiki/Pimp)" status. People in the neighborhood then began calling them cripples, or "Crips" for short.[[9]](#cite_note-9) A *Los Angeles Sentinel* article in February 1972 referred to some members as "Crips" (for cripples).<ref name=US1/> The name had no political, organizational, cryptic, or acronymic meaning, though some have suggested it stands for "Common Revolution In Progress", a [backronym](/wiki/Backronym). According to the film [*Bastards of the Party*](/wiki/Bastards_of_the_Party) directed by a member of the Bloods, the name represented "Community Revolutionary Interparty Service" or "Community Reform Interparty Service". Williams, in his memoir, further refuted claims that the group was a spin-off of the [Black Panther Party](/wiki/Black_Panther_Party) or formed for a community agenda, the name "depicted a fighting alliance against street gangs—nothing more, nothing less."[[2]](#cite_note-2) Washington, who attended Fremont High School, was the leader of the East Side Crips, and Williams, who attended Washington High School, led the West Side Crips. [thumb|right|A Crip](/wiki/File:Crip_handsign.gif) [gang signal](/wiki/Gang_signal)

Williams recalled that a blue bandana was first worn by Crips founding member Buddha, as a part of his color-coordinated clothing of blue Levi's, a blue shirt, and dark blue suspenders. A blue bandana was worn in tribute to Buddha after he was shot and killed on February 23, 1973, which eventually became the color of blue associated with Crips.[[2]](#cite_note-2)

### Chain of command[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

Initially Crips leaders did not occupy leadership positions, but were recognized as leaders because of their personal charisma and influence. These leaders gave priority to expanding the gang's membership to increase its power. The gang became increasingly violent as they attempted to expand their turf.

## Membership[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

Crips has over 800 sets with 30,000 to 35,000 members and associate members, including more than 13,000 members in Los Angeles. The states with the highest estimated number of "Crips sets" are California, Florida and Illinois. Members typically consist of young African-American men, with some members being white, Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander.<ref name=US1/>

## Crip on Crip rivalries[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

The Crips became popular throughout southern Los Angeles as more youth gangs joined; at one point they outnumbered non-Crip gangs by 3 to 1, sparking disputes with non-Crip gangs, including the L.A. Brims, Athens Park Boys, the Bishops, The Drill Company, and the Denver Lanes. By 1971 the gang's notoriety had spread across Los Angeles.

By 1971, a gang on Piru Street in [Compton, California](/wiki/Compton,_California), known as the [Piru Street Boys](/wiki/Pirus), was formed and associated themselves with the Crips as a set. After two years of peace, a feud began between the Piru Street Boys and the other Crip sets. It would later turn violent as gang warfare ensued between former allies. This battle continued and by 1973, the Piru Street Boys wanted to end the violence and called a meeting with other gangs that were targeted by the Crips. After a long discussion, the [Pirus](/wiki/Pirus) broke all connections to the Crips and started an organization that would later be called the [Bloods](/wiki/Bloods),[[10]](#cite_note-10) a street gang infamous for its rivalry with the Crips.

Since then, other conflicts and feuds were started between many of the remaining sets of the Crips gang. It is a popular misconception that Crips sets feud only with Bloods. In reality, they fight each other—for example, the Rollin' 60s and 83rd Street Gangster Crips have been rivals since 1979. In [Watts, Los Angeles](/wiki/Watts,_Los_Angeles), the Grape Street Watts Crips and the P Jay Crips have feuded so much that the P Jay Crips even teamed up with the local Bloods set, the Bounty Hunter Bloods, to fight against the Grape Street Crips.[[11]](#cite_note-11) In the mid 90s, the Hoover Crips rivalries and wars with other Crip gangs caused them to become independent and to refrain from using the Crip name, calling themselves Hoover Criminal Gang instead of Hoover Crip.

## Alliances and rivalries[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

### Rivalry with [[Bloods]][[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

The primary rival of the Crips is the Bloods street-gang. The rivalry dates back to the 1960s when Raymond Washington and several other Crips confronted Sylvester Scott and Benson Owens, students at [Centennial High School](/wiki/Centennial_High_School_(Compton,_California)). In response to the attack, Scott, who lived in Compton, established the Piru street-gang, the first "Bloods" street gang. Owens established the West Piru street-gang. The Bloods street-gang was initially formed to provide members protection from the Crips.[[12]](#cite_note-12) In late 1972, several gangs that felt victimized by the Crips due to their escalating attacks joined the Piru Street Boys to create a new federation of non-Crip gangs which would later become known as Bloods. Between 1972 and 1979, the rivalry between the Bloods and Crips would grow, accounting for a majority of the gang-related murders in southern Los Angeles. Gang members of the Bloods and Crips occasionally fight against each other and are responsible for a significant portion of gang-related murders in Los Angeles.[[13]](#cite_note-13)

### Alliance with [[Folk Nation]][[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as many Crip gang members were being sent to various prisons across the country, an alliance was formed between the Crips and the Folk Nation in Midwest and Southern U.S. prisons. This alliance was established as a means of protecting gang members incarcerated in state and federal and prison systems. This alliance is strong within the prisons however is less effective outside them. The alliance between Folks and Crips is known as *8-ball*. A broken *8-ball* would indicate a beef or disagreement between Folks and Crips.[[7]](#cite_note-7)

## Practices[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|Crip graffiti tag in Olympia, Washington.](/wiki/File:Crips_tag.jpg) Some practices of Crip gang life generally include [graffiti](/wiki/Graffiti) and substitutions and deletions of particular letters of the alphabet. The letter "b" in the word "blood" will be "disrespected" among certain sets and written with a cross inside it because of its association with the enemy. The letters "CK", which stand for "Crip killer", will be avoided and substituted with a double "cc", and the letter "b" will be replaced. The words "kick back" will instead be written as "kicc bkacc". Many other letters are also altered due to symbolic associations.[[14]](#cite_note-14) Crips traditionally refer to each other as "Cuzz", which itself is sometimes used as a moniker for Crip. "Crab" is the most disrespectful epithet to call a Crip, and can warrant fatal retaliation.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Crips in prison modules during the 1970s and 80s would speak in [Swahili](/wiki/Swahili_language) to maintain privacy from guards and rival gangs.[[16]](#cite_note-16)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Black Mafia Family](/wiki/Black_Mafia_Family)
* [Crip Walk](/wiki/Crip_Walk)
* [Crime in Los Angeles](/wiki/Crime_in_Los_Angeles)
* [*Hood 2 Hood: The Blockumentary*](/wiki/Hood_2_Hood:_The_Blockumentary)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Commons category](/wiki/Template:Commons_category)

* [PBS Independent Lens program on South Los Angeles gangs](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/cripsandbloods/)
* [Snopes Urban Legend](http://www.snopes.com/language/acronyms/crip.htm) – The origin of the name Crips

[Template:Organized crime groups in America](/wiki/Template:Organized_crime_groups_in_America) [Template:Organized crime groups in New York City](/wiki/Template:Organized_crime_groups_in_New_York_City)

[Category:Crips](/wiki/Category:Crips) [Category:African-American gangs](/wiki/Category:African-American_gangs) [Category:Gangs in the United States](/wiki/Category:Gangs_in_the_United_States) [Category:Gangs in Canada](/wiki/Category:Gangs_in_Canada) [Category:History of Los Angeles, California](/wiki/Category:History_of_Los_Angeles,_California) [Category:Modern street gangs](/wiki/Category:Modern_street_gangs) [Category:Organized crime groups in the United States](/wiki/Category:Organized_crime_groups_in_the_United_States) [Category:1969 establishments in California](/wiki/Category:1969_establishments_in_California)