

# Cambodian Crips starting to muscle in



PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER

**Capt. David Shinn**, commander of the Tenderloin Station, has held that job for a year. "If you feel someone is about to go off, call us," he suggests.

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"We want people to recognize problems before they become police problems," Shinn said. "We increased our presence after the Dalt for a calming effect. Our message is if you feel someone is about to go off, call us. We need to be involved whatever the issue is. You can remain anonymous." The first seminar will be Sept. 25 in the station Community Room.

But it is the drug traffic that causes a gnawing daily concern for families, other residents and workers. After dark, of course, certain blocks, given the smattering of boarded-up storefronts, become even more menacing.

On July 30, the Police Commission, in the neighborhood on its regular rotation of community meetings, got an earful. Residents pleaded for more police patrols and urged the formation of special safety committees. Staff of nonprofit agencies said their clients are victimized by dealers who sell sometimes near schools and child care centers.

After listening to a hour of safety complaints, Commissioner Wayne Friday told the crowd: "I wouldn't want to raise my kids here. Maybe we need a Marshall Plan for drug dealers."

Tenderloin Station's report to the commission at the meeting showed that nearly half the district's arrests May 28-June 24 were drug-related.

Complicating the scene now are Tenderloin gangs. According to the Violent Gang Task Force, there are two gangs, one Latino, the other Southeast Asian, each about 50 strong. Both have been around for a while and, according to Lt. Kitt Crenshaw, who heads the force, aren't especially prone to violence, perhaps because the station is now in the heart of the neighborhood.

"No," Crenshaw said, "I don't think the incident was gang-related. But it was likely drug-related. There's something of a slow migration in that area from other Tenderloin areas.

But the drug activity goes up and down the district, down to Market Street and back. It lasts for weeks or months in one place before enforcement moves it out. And the Southeast Asians have carved out that territory (at Eddy and Hyde). Prostitution is there, too."

Shinn wonders whether the July 24 attack will go unanswered. "My fear is that there will be retaliation," he said. Moreover, a new gang is entering the fray.

"The Cambodian Crips are trying to get a foothold in the Tenderloin," Shinn said. "It is my understanding that a few Cambodians here are attracting other Cambodians from elsewhere. I don't know if any come from out of town.

"We're doing surveillance to find out what we can. And some of my officers have volunteered to work some different hours to break this thing up. But gangs have not been that major of a problem."

Shinn said his officers recently moved some dice shooters away from the Tenderloin Recreation Center on Ellis.

The Tenderloin police generally get high marks from the community as a deterrent to crime but a number of residents believe the solution to stopping crime lies elsewhere. Drug arrests seem toothless if dealers are merely released the next day to return to their haunts.

"They're arrested one day and out the next," said Crenshaw. "And that continues to be part of the problem. When we get a new DA sympathetic to the needs of the community, we'll get somewhere."

Others think security at neglected property, more new businesses coming in, shop owners taking more responsibility for their sidewalk areas and, in general, more citizen participation to problem-solve and to enhance the neighborhood would edge the dealers out.

"But we can't just keep calling the cops," says Michael Nulty, Tenant Associations Coalition director. "It's not the answer, but it can have a deterrent affect."

The Guardian Angels may become another deterrent. Now they are providing security at Club 220 on Jones Street. Club owner Terrance Alan, chairman of the Late Night Coalition and the city's new Entertainment Commission chairman, brought two Angels to the July Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting. Alan said he has used the macho men with the red berets at the club for six months. Peter Dempsey, the San Francisco chapter's special operations leader, said he is recruiting members to begin patrolling the Tenderloin, but he didn't say when.

David Baker, a 25-year resident, sees citizen participation as the answer to stopping crime.

"Ten years ago we had the structure for battling crime but it was emasculated," he says of the police community meetings that were held when the station headquarters was in the Hibernia Bank at No. 1 Jones St. "We had maximum participation and we broke up into four working groups to address issues. Capt. (Steve) Tacchini changed that and it became a lecture-stu-

dent format. He eliminated community input. I complained to Capt. Shinn for it to be restored, but he wasn't receptive."

Shinn, who followed Tacchini at the Tenderloin station and celebrated his first year Aug. 3, nonetheless came in for much praise at the July 30 community meeting

A dozen speakers complimented the stocky Asian commander with a ready smile for his diligence and responsiveness. One speaker noted his long hours and seeing him patrolling at 8 and 9 at night.

But in the overcrowded room holding more than 60, the No. 1 gripe was the scourge of dope dealers. As the microphone got passed from one person to the next, the audience, including acting Chief Alex Fagan, heard the dismay over 15- to 18-year-old sellers and the stream of returning repeat offenders, the frustration over this scene being flaunted in front of children, and the out-of-towners who slip down a hole at the end of the day and escape on BART. Most depressing, it was pointed out, is the 100 block of Jones.

"Most people would be terrified to walk that," declared Shawn Collins, executive director of the Tenderloin Sidewalk Improvement Program whose workers are on the streets every day. "I dare anyone here to walk that gauntlet tonight as we

## Gangs spring to mind

THE day of the Eddy-Hyde knifings, Extra reporter Ed Bowers nosed around the neighborhood for reaction. Few people had heard about the incident, including the man behind the counter at the Cadillac Market at Eddy and Hyde, kitty-corner from the New Princess.

Bob Labriola, the man who would be mayor of the Tenderloin, immediately surmised that the incident was gang-related, though the SF Gate, first to report the stabbings, said it wasn't. Hyde and Eddy is a hot spot for heroin dealers, Labriola said, and "the Cholos and Hispanics are at war over territory."

leave. How can a parent safely drop off a child around there during the day?"

Existing resources are not enough to combat the situation, he said, and anyone can venture down here and tell that the Tenderloin is in trouble. "Please come up with a plan," Collins pleaded, "and ask us how we can help." This brought Fagan to his feet, an unusual response, he admitted, since as a matter of form he doesn't break into the stream of public commentary.

"The thing I'm hearing," Fagan said, "is that more needs to be done. So we're going to work on that and see what more can be done." He also mentioned the "cockroach" pattern of dealers - in light they scatter only to return in darkness. "But when it moves,

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**Police Commissioner Wayne Friday** was blunt in his comments to residents.

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