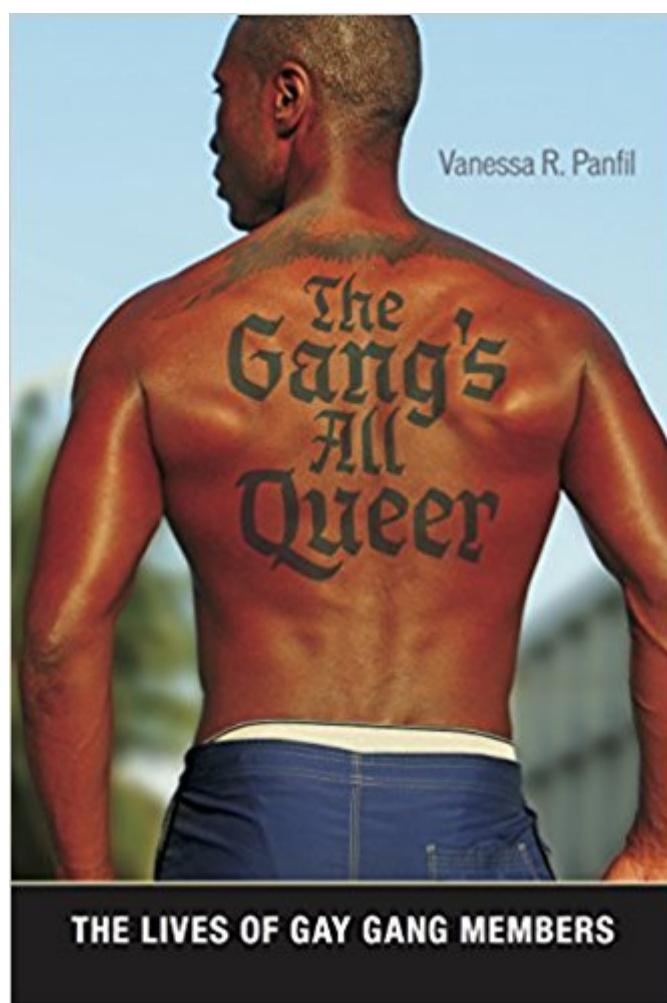


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The Gang's All Queer: The Lives Of Gay Gang Members (Alternative Criminology)



Synopsis

The first inside look at gay gang members. Many people believe that gangs are made up of violent thugs who are in and out of jail, and who are hyper-masculine and heterosexual. In *The Gangs All Queer*, Vanessa Panfil introduces us to a different world. Meet gay gang members – “sometimes referred to in popular culture as ‘homo thugs’” – whose gay identity complicates criminology’s portrayal and representation of gangs, gang members, and gang life. In vivid detail, Panfil provides an in-depth understanding of how gay gang members construct and negotiate both masculine and gay identities through crime and gang membership. *The Gangs All Queer* draws from interviews with over 50 gay gang- and crime-involved young men in Columbus, Ohio, the majority of whom are men of color in their late teens and early twenties, as well as on-the-ground ethnographic fieldwork with men who are in gay, hybrid, and straight gangs. Panfil provides an eye-opening portrait of how even members of straight gangs are connected to a same-sex oriented underground world. Most of these young men still present a traditionally masculine persona and voice deeply-held affection for their fellow gang members. They also fight with their enemies, many of whom are in rival gay gangs. Most come from impoverished, “rough” neighborhoods, and seek to defy negative stereotypes of gay and Black men as deadbeats, though sometimes through illegal activity. Some are still closeted to their fellow gang members and families, yet others fight to defend members of the gay community, even those who they deem to be “fags,” despite distaste for these flamboyant members of the community. And some perform in drag shows or sell sex to survive. *The Gangs All Queer* poignantly illustrates how these men both respond to and resist societal marginalization. Timely, powerful, and engaging, this book will challenge us to think differently about gangs, gay men, and urban life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“This book makes a substantial contribution to queer criminology. The book artfully shifts from the conception of gays as victims of hate crime to gays as agents and offenders, all while challenging troubling racist stereotypes of queer and Black masculinities. The conversations that this book can facilitate will greatly impact how we think about crime and criminology, while developing queer, black, and racialized-inclusive criminological research.” •Wesley Crichton, author of *Buller Men and Bwatty Boys* “The Gang’s All Queer not only provides an exciting and rich description of gay gang life, but it exposes the ease with which we’d heretofore seen gangs as an entirely (unexamined) heterosexual enterprise. A startling and essential book.” -Michael Kimmel, author of *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era* “Panfil inserts herself into the underground of an underground . . . to better understand the experiences of gay men in the hypermasculine context of gang life. Complicates assumptions that male gang members and active offenders are exclusively heterosexual and . . . paves the way for a more in-depth understanding of a marginalized community.” -Publishers Weekly “The Gang’s All Queer offers a treasure trove of insights for gang scholars, but more importantly, demonstrates how much we all have to gain by embracing the queer criminological turn.” •Jody Miller, author of *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*

Vanessa R. Panfil is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Old Dominion University. She is the co-editor of the *Handbook of LGBT Communities, Crime, and Justice*.

This tale was a refreshing read in regular English, rather than academia English, and wasn’t bogged down in stuff that went over the head of this Average Jane reader. I say this because I’ve recently tried to read other non-fiction, that interesting as it was, was way above my level of persistence and comprehension. In this, a white, lesbian student studies gangs in Ohio over a period of time, building a relationship of trust with them to the degree that they socialised and some are still in contact with her on social media (they reaches out; she doesn’t, for fear of outing anyone). It’s interesting to see

exactly how open the gang members she's encountered are, and how most of them are about finding a boyfriend, not just sex, swagger, dealing, turf wars or gesturing/posing. Some had family that accepted them after soul-searching, some had family that accepted them and even knew about their orientation, and yes, others were rejected by family. All of them accepted slurs to varying degrees, explaining that they used the same to describe themselves. Some of the words used, would be seen by most people as offensive, but they explained the use, and yes, it was in context. There's a whole vocabulary that I learned, that I hadn't considered in context of gay men. There are too many words to list, but the issue of 'passing' came up - surprising to me, as I'd expected most to attempt to conceal their sexuality in order to be accepted, but in reality, few seemed bothered about it. Some gangs were straight, some gay, some hybrid and seemingly, there were no huge hostilities. I'm not sure if the book is something that can be taken as gospel, as the study comprised circa 50 guys in a localised area, over time, with occasional treats being offered and money paid, so to some degree, a relationship of sorts built between the members and VRP. Had the study also been conducted in other parts of the country, simultaneously, and had there been more about the gang culture and life and what drew the guys into them and lead them to prison, it perhaps would have been more balanced and believable. I didn't get much of a sense of danger from the guys who were detailed, from those who were mentioned in passing, from the places they all went, from the socialising they did, so I'm not entirely convinced of the impartiality and accuracy of the study. These guys were no Ross Kemp Investigates gang members, but came across as...not-really-that-threatening types. ARC courtesy of NYU Press and NetGalley, for my reading pleasure.

Good book and analysis of being gay in a gang. We have heard of the term down low men. Well, this book is about being on the down low in a place that you must be super macho. One would never think you would find gay men in such a macho setting. I never really know bought much about this, but after reading this book, I feel bad for the men. What a burden to carry, to not be able to be oneself. Good and interesting book. Thanks to NetGalley, the author and the publisher for the advanced reading copy of this book in return for my honest review

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