

Police Investigating Source of Leaflets With Racist Messages

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Police Investigating Source of Leaflets With Racist Messages

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Glendale police are investigating a white supremacist group that they believe placed leaflets with racist messages on car windshields and in mailboxes of homes in Glendale, Pasadena, La Canada Flintridge and southern Tujunga, a police spokesman said.

The leaflets have appeared sporadically over the past six months, most recently near Glendale Community College about a month ago, said Glendale Sgt. Lief Nicolaisen, who supervises hate crime investigations for the police department.

The content of the flyers—which depict stereotyped cartoons of Asians, African-Americans and Jews and display racist statements—is protected as free speech,

but the distributors violated municipal and federal postal codes by delivering their message without a permit, Nicolaisen said.

"Essentially, what we're dealing with is low-grade misdemeanors," he said.

Normally, such minor infractions might not be pursued, and Pasadena Police say they have closed their probe of a similar incident, but the Glendale Police Department is pursuing the case, Nicolaisen said.

Glendale in the past has been used as a headquarters for several white supremacist groups, but the city is trying to send a strong message that racial intolerance is not welcome, Nicolaisen said.

"The police department treats these crimes with the utmost vigilance. We want the community to feel confident of that," he said.

About 200 flyers were removed from cars and

mailboxes by police after a number of Glendale residents called to complain, Nicolaisen said.

In addition to racist statements, the flyers list 15 telephone numbers for interested parties to call, one of them with a Glendale area code and prefix. The other area codes cover a wide swath of the United States, Nicolaisen said.

All of the numbers lead to a recorded message by White Aryan Resistance, or WAR, which is based in northern San Diego County and has chapters in Orange County. Although Nicolaisen said he does not believe the group has a San Gabriel Valley chapter, the recorded message offers a Covina post office box.

White Aryan Resistance was founded by white supremacist Tom Metzger, former grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan. Metzger, who lives in northern San Diego

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County, and two others were sentenced in December, 1991, for their role in a 1983 cross-burning in Lake View Terrace. Both Metzger and his son, John, were also held liable in a civil suit in 1990 in connection with the beating death of an Ethiopian immigrant in Portland, Ore., and Tom Metzger was forced to sell his home to help pay the \$12.5-million judgment.

"I haven't seen the leaflets, but if anyone wants to promote our association that's great with us," Tom Metzger said. "We put out a lot of material and everyone is welcome to get a hold of it and spread it around."

Metzger said police are using a double standard.

"Obviously [the leaflet distributors] are not supposed to put things in federal mailboxes, and stuff like that. On the other side of the coin, there are thousands of people doing that every day—putting leaflets on cars—and I don't think the police get too excited about it."

Metzger said he had not been contacted by police about the leaflets.

"I would just laugh at them and tell them to take a hike," he said.

The group has about 40 telephone numbers nationwide and has

had the 818 number for one or two years, John Metzger said.

About a month ago, a Glendale Community College student turned one of the flyers over to campus officials, said Mike Southerland, director of campus security.

The student found the flyer in a city parking lot across from the college, he said. Campus security officers searched for more flyers but did not find any.

"We didn't want any of that material anywhere around the college," Southerland said.

In Pasadena, residents in the Linda Vista area found the leaflets in their mailboxes about three months ago, Pasadena Police Sgt. Rick Aversano said.

A few residents filed police reports complaining about the material, he said, but the minor nature of the infraction makes it difficult to prosecute.

"There are some postal laws that are violated—delivering mail without paying postage. And technically, they're trespassing if they come up on people's property. But I would say right now that probably the investigation is suspended or closed, unless someone wants to make a citizen's arrest [of a trespasser]," he said.