

## Defense calls gang expert

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WHITE PLAINS — The Bloods in Newburgh worked in strange ways, according to a gang expert.

By DOYLE MURPHY WHITE PLAINS — The Bloods in Newburgh worked in strange ways, according to a gang expert.

Federal prosecutors claim Anthony "Double O" Boykin ranked at the top of more than half of a dozen branches or "sets" of the gang. From that position, the prosecutors say, he controlled the dozens of foot soldiers who terrorized the city through violence and drug dealing.

Boykin and co-defendant Justin "Justo" Simmons are on trial, facing federal charges of racketeering, narcotics conspiracy and murder.

Boykin's attorney, Lisa Scolari, began her case Thursday by calling to the stand Lisa Taylor Austin, a psychotherapist whom the court recognized as an expert based on more than two decades of experience working with gangs. Austin



testified that she had counseled about 2,000 gangsters on the West and East Coast.

Scolari has argued that prosecutors lumped together a bunch of small-time gangs and called them "The Newburgh Bloods."

She has contested claims Boykin or anyone had control over all the city's sets, because they each operated independently, without any over-arching hierarchy.

In general, Austin supported the theory. She said real Bloods don't work that way. Austin explained that various sets might gather on occasion for a party, but a Blood from one set wouldn't usually attend meetings of another set. Similarly, a leader of one set wouldn't have the authority to order a soldier from another set to do anything.

If a bunch of guys called themselves Bloods and followed different rules, as prosecutors claim happened in Newburgh, Austin said she would have questions.

"I would wonder why they were doing that," she said.

Boykin, in particular, would have been an outsider according to Bloods customs.

He is an admitted member of the Bounty Hunter set, an affiliation that is rare on the East Coast because the Bounty Hunters are a West Coast set, Austin said.

Prosecutors contend members of the Bloods in Newburgh may not have operated by the rules set down by the Bloods' founding fathers, but that didn't make them any less of a gang or any less dangerous.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Maimin grilled Austin about the details of gang operations in Newburgh.

Austin conceded her knowledge was more general and she'd only driven through Newburgh.

"Have you ever stopped to ask (Newburgh residents) whether they cared which set was shooting up their neighborhood?" Maimin asked.

Austin said she had not.



The trial continues **Monday.**

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