



# Maricopa County Attorney

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## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Historic verdict labels Hells Angels a Criminal Street Gang**

*Verdict is a first in Arizona*

County Attorney Andrew Thomas announced today that for the first time in Arizona, a jury has labeled the Hells Angels a criminal street gang when they convicted a gang member in an assault case at a Scottsdale bar.

On September 15, 2009, a Maricopa County Superior Court Jury handed down the precedent setting verdict in the trial of Nathaniel Sample (DOB 6/8/77). In addition to convicting Sample of Aggravated Assault, a class 6 felony, and of acting for the benefit of a criminal street gang, a class 3 felony, jurors were specifically asked by prosecutors to find that the Sample's actions were in furtherance of the Hells Angels as a criminal street gang. Jurors did just that for the first time in Arizona.

On March 28, 2008 a man was severely beaten after he accidentally bumped into a member of the Hells Angels at the Billet Bar in Scottsdale. The victim was kicked and punched as he lay on the ground. Some witnesses even saw the victim being struck in the head with a beer bottle. The fight ended when a woman threw herself on top of the victim screaming for the beating to stop. A co-defendant is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to Aggravated Assault, a class 3 felony. Sample will be sentenced on November 2, 2009.

The Hells Angels know their way around the legal system and fight any gang allegation levied against them. They routinely collect fees from their members throughout the country to pay for defense lawyers who contest any charge labeling them as a "criminal street gang." Nonetheless, the efforts of the prosecution team, in conjunction with the dedication of the Scottsdale Gang Unit and support from other Arizona law enforcement agencies and resources, secured justice for the victim and an accurate label for an outlaw motorcycle gang.

Thomas stated, "This verdict sends a message to all street gangs that their acts of violence and terror will not be tolerated."

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