



Cholo style, originating from Chicanos in the US, can be seen here as adopted by men from Cacos 13, a gang from the La Neza (Nezahualcoyotl) neighbourhood of Mexico City. [WIKIPEDIA](#)

lence are the highest in the city, keep saying, "There are no centers. There are no places for these kids to go to that will keep them out of trouble and out of wild streets." When you're dealing with these really young kids, you have to recognize that they have some different needs. You can't treat the gang as one thing when they have 18-year-olds and nine-year-olds. You need an approach for those very young kids. One of the things in Chicago and the United States that

I've been involved with was testifying at trials or re-sentencing of kids in the 90s who had killed more than one person. The Supreme Court has said that they have to be re-sentenced because you can't automatically sentence them to life without parole. You would be amazed by the changes that prison makes in these young people. There was a time when they were 13, and they killed two people. Now, 20-30 years later, their lives have changed because when they were 13 years old, they

were completely different human beings. You got to look at these young kids and realize that they have all sorts of potential and that even if they do terrible things, this is just part of being really young and doing stupid stuff. It doesn't mean they're a career criminal at age nine. You can't treat them that way.

**What can the media do to alleviate and perhaps help solve the problem?**  
That's a great question. Yes, the media is so much of the

problem. It sensationalizes crimes and violence and demonizes the gangs. It paints the gangs as being made up of young kids that are evil. It is just as important for the media to make distinctions as it is for the police. It's really important for the media to not paint with this broad brush and not to demonize these young kids. Saying that gangs are made up of different kinds of kids is hard for the media to do because they want to have one simple idea for everybody to get. But your job, the

job of people that are a little bit more enlightened, is to insist that the media make distinctions and not sensationalize and demonize which only makes the problem worse.

**And, do you have any final points you'd like to share with our audience?**  
Best wishes to the people of Iran. I was thinking about it today. In this country, Iran is demonized like gangs are. I'm very happy to have a chance to speak directly to the people of Iran.



In this June 19, 2014 photo, a 14-year-old Guatemalan girl traveling alone to the U.S. waits for a northbound freight train along with other Central American migrants, in Mexico. [REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP](#)

