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Janette Beckman

Riviera Bad Girls, LA, 1983

"I spent the summer of 1983 driving out to a dusty park in East LA to document the El Hoyo Maravilla gang. I brought some of my photos of the London punk, skinhead scene to show them, explaining these were kind of like the 'gangs' in the UK.

The area was poor, hot and arid, and there was the constant sound of LAPD helicopters buzzing overhead. The gang members introduced me to their families, and showed me the barrio.

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One day three girls turned up in the park, and I asked to photograph them. I loved their style and attitude. They told me they were the 'Riviera Bad Girls.' I photographed them leaning against a car.

Thirty years later my Dashwood book about the gang had just come out and it was getting a lot of press on the internet. The 'Riviera Bad Girls' reached out to me. I was in LA, and we met for lunch at the Homeboy Cafe,

These three women had amazing stories to tell. They told me that most of the guys I photographed were either in jail or dead. But they were survivors, remaining close friends, raising kids, still living in the old neighborhood. Vikki, Norma and Vivien have great jobs working for the DA's office, in human resources, and at Homeboy Industries, providing training and support for former gang members.

I photographed them again on the street outside the cafe. They came to an exhibition I was having with their families and were the stars of the show."

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