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TSB investigators found these tagging tools and practice samples in an Inglewood home on Oct. 23. *Photo: LASD*

18-Year-Old Tagger Arrested for \$100,000 in Damages to Metro Vehicles

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Nov. 4, 2008) Transit Services Bureau (TSB) deputies arrested a prolific tagger on Oct. 23 and charged the 18-year-old with causing approximately \$100,000 in damage to Metro property.

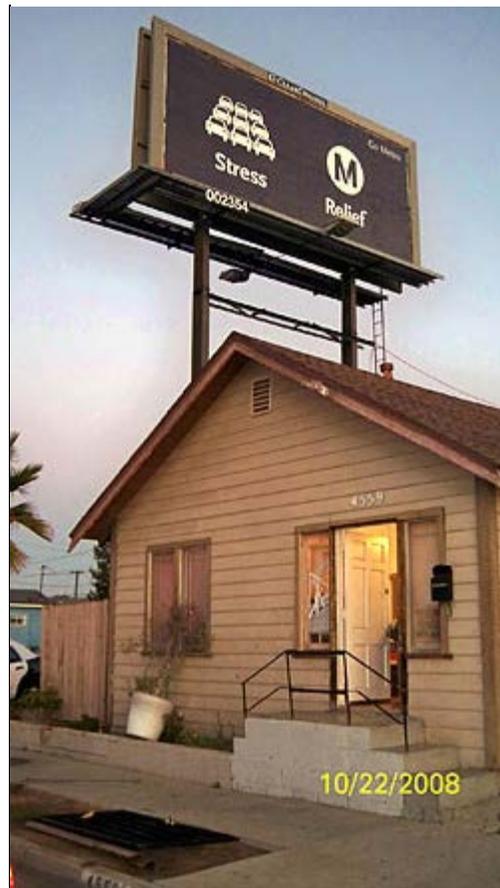
Filed in Inglewood Juvenile Court (because the suspect committed the vandalism while a minor), the felony vandalism charge names Giovanni Gomez as the tagger using the moniker of "Hate."

Gomez was arrested at his Inglewood home. His mother was arrested at the home as well, and both were charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor, Gomez' 11-year-old brother.

According to TSB Sgt. Chris Meadows, the suspect etched and painted the seats of buses and rail cars, prolifically damaging vehicles from multiple divisions.

"I saw his moniker on a high percentage of the buses I walked onto," said Meadows, recalling a particular tagged bus in the Walnut Park area. "Everywhere we went we saw this fellow's moniker."

Ironically, towering over the suspect's home, rising from a narrow yard beside the house, is a large billboard. Displayed on the billboard at the time of the arrest was an image from Metro's "opposites" advertising campaign.



Deputies suspect that Gomez is a member of the ECM tagging team, which has targeted the Harbor Gateway area.

An 18-year-old tagging suspect was arrested at this Inglewood home for causing \$100,000 damage to Metro property. A billboard, which includes a Metro advertisement, sits in the property's side yard. *Photo: LASD*

Gomez was released on his own recognizance. According to Meadows, Gomez next appears in court on Nov. 21.