



(March 3) Focused undercover work by LAPD anti-graffiti GHOST unit officers has virtually wiped out vandalism on Metro Bus Line 45, a bus route heavily traveled by students at Lincoln High School.

Over the past several months, with activity peaking in February, as many as a dozen Special Enforcement Section officers worked Line 45. Some rode the bus in plain clothes to observe passengers, others followed behind four target buses in unmarked vehicles.

#### **Damage estimated at \$7,900**

Officers arrested 16 juveniles - three of them twice - during their surveillance activities. The boys, ages 15 and 17, were cited or booked on charges ranging from vandalism and possession of vandalism tools to possession of an altered bus pass. All are students at Lincoln High School. Graffiti damage was estimated at more than \$7,900.

The GHOST unit worked closely with Division 10 Maintenance Supervisor Jim Fulkerson and Mechanic Leadman Marco Pedemonte, who assured that all buses were graffiti-free when they left the division for morning and afternoon runs.

#### **Surveillance cameras effective**

Camera-equipped buses were assigned to the surveillance effort. The camera evidence proved highly effective in helping police identify the suspects and gaining confessions to the crimes. Lincoln High administrators also helped police during the investigation.

On the last day of the assignment, GHOST officers checking the buses following their last run found "no new observed graffiti," according to a police report.

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