

## **Bomb Threats Halt Light-Rail Service; Deputies Evacuate Area, Arrest LA Man**

(Nov 3) Bomb threats completely closed the Metro Green Line and halted service on the Metro Blue Line from 103rd Street to the Compton Station for almost six hours Thursday night. A portion of the I-105 freeway was closed for three hours.

The phone threats forced the evacuation of some 30 MTA and Sheriff's Department employees at the MTA's Rail Operations Center. Deputies also evacuated the nearby Kenny Hahn Plaza and the Imperial Courts housing project just north of the Rosa Parks Station. No one was injured.

Controllers for the Metro Red and Blue lines were sent to the train yards where they continued to operate the system via radio and manually. Metro Green Line trains east of the Rosa Parks station were held at Norwalk until the situation cleared.

While MTA rail and bus officials scrambled to revise train service and set up bus bridges for stranded passengers, Sheriff's deputies attempted to trace the source of the threats.

### **Bomb Squad set charges**

The county Bomb Squad, meanwhile, isolated a gray Cadillac parked at the Rosa Parks Station and twice set charges to force open its trunk. A robot, sent in about midnight, found no explosives.

Deputies later traced the bomb threat calls to a pay phone and arrested Jessie Vargas, 37, of Los Angeles. Vargas was booked on charges of making terrorist threats, making false reports of a bomb and interference with transit services. He was held at the Century Region detention Facility at Alameda and Imperial.

Thursday evening's bomb threats were the crowing event of what already had been a hectic day for Metro Rail.

During morning rush, a two-vehicle accident blocked the Metro Blue Line tracks for about 40 minutes at 119th Street in Willowbrook. At about 2:30 p.m., a train injured a female pedestrian at the Vernon Avenue intersection, delaying southbound service for about an hour.

"Yesterday was just one of those days," said Jess Diaz, Metro Rail superintendent. "It was an interesting day...."

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