

## Metro Rail's Keith Salazar Helps Nab Graffiti Vandal



(Feb. 20, 2002) Keith Salazar, an MTA traction power inspector, probably never expected that he would be instrumental in assisting the LAPD in arresting a graffiti vandal.

But, that's exactly what happened on Sunday, Feb. 17. As Salazar was walking along the platform of the Universal City Metro Red Line station, a commuter pointed to a 17-year-old juvenile inside the train. The juvenile was stuffing an aerosol can into a backpack.

Salazar noticed that the inside of the train had been badly tagged. Graffiti disfigured the windows, entry door and passenger seats.

He immediately notified the Rail Operations Center, which alerted the LAPD, then held the train until officers arrived.

According to a police report, the juvenile had eight spray paint cans in the backpack. While talking to the juvenile, the officers noticed paint on both his hands. He was arrested for felony vandalism and placed in Sylmar Juvenile Hall. The train sustained an estimated \$3,000 in damages.

The LAPD commended Salazar Keith for his quick actions and assistance in battling crime on the Metro Red Line.

According to the LAPD, the graffiti problem continues to plague the Metro Red Line and is by far the biggest crime problem in the system. The LAPD relies heavily on the assistance of MTA employees in combating vandalism.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** LAPD Lt. Steven J. Flores provided the information for this story. Flores is assigned to the LAPD Transit Rail Division, which is responsible for providing law enforcement services on the Metro Red Line.

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