

MTA Employees 'Get The Collar' on Subway Vandal

By STEVEN FLORES

(April 2, 2002) Quick thinking and good timing enabled MTA employees to catch a vandal in the act and stop him from getting away to create more damage.

Douglas Jackson, Assistant Rail Transportation Manager at the Rail Operations Center and his co-worker, James Stevens, entered a Metro Red Line train at the 7th and Metro station on Tuesday, March 19.

As they boarded the train, they saw a young man defacing the inside of the car with a black marker. Jackson immediately notified the train operator using the emergency intercom.

The suspect, later identified as Aaron Ihenacho, saw Jackson talking on the intercom. Jackson and Stevens followed him off the train at the next stop, Pershing Square. There, all three ran into LAPD officers Robert Harris and Edward Nacua, who were on duty at the platform.

Jackson and Stevens explained to the officers what had happened. Ihenacho's black marker was recovered from his pocket, and he was placed under arrest.

Booked for vandalism

The amount of damage was less than \$400, so Ihenacho, who recently turned 18, was booked as an adult for misdemeanor vandalism.

The law requires that an offense be committed in officers' presence in order for them to make a misdemeanor arrest. Since the officers weren't in the train when the vandalism occurred, the actual arrest was credited to Jackson. Officers Harris and Nacua took custody of Ihenacho and transported him to jail.

The LAPD places officers on the platforms of the busiest Red Line stations during peak hours to ensure commuter safety. The strategy paid off this time by making officers available to the MTA employees. Together they were able to stop a graffiti vandal.

The LAPD commended Jackson and Stevens for their quick action and assistance in battling graffiti on the Red Line.

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

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