



< San Gabriel Division Operator Jacqueline Luna

EDITOR'S NOTE: (May 9, 2002) This article first appeared in the Wednesday, May 8, issue of the San Gabriel Valley Tribune. San Gabriel Division 9 Operator Jacqueline Luna is the bus operator who outwitted the suspect.

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## Quick-thinking driver foils bombing suspect

By Ruby Gonzales, San Gabriel Valley Tribune

LOS ANGELES -- A bus driver pretended to have brake problems on Tuesday in order to stop the El Monte-bound vehicle after a passenger allegedly made bomb threats.

Witnesses told police the man also said, "Synchronize your watch, when we get to El Monte we're going to blow."

None of the other nine passengers on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus were injured during the 1:25 a.m. incident at Lamar Street, east of North Main Street. Los Angeles police found no bomb in the man's suitcase, just personal belongings.

Steve Harold Wilson, 46, from the Inland Empire, was arrested on suspicion of making a false bomb threat. He'll be arraigned Thursday.

He may be suffering from some type of mental condition, according to Detective Ray Morales of the LAPD's criminal conspiracy section.

"He made a number of threats to blow up the bus," Rodriguez said. "The bus driver was calm, cool and collected. ... kept her wits about her. She feigned a mechanical problem."

The driver, Jacqueline Luna of Whittier, said the man came on board wearing sunglasses and looked like the sketch of the Unabomber. He wore a hooded sweat shirt and was scraggly. He also started acting strange.

"First he pulled something from his hand like a Walkman. He pulled something out of it," Luna said.

The man started pacing inside the bus and was saying something she couldn't hear at first. Police said he was making bomb threats. One of the passengers told Luna the man had a bomb.

Luna called the dispatcher and was told to say she had a problem with the bus. She pulled over and announced there was a problem with the brakes.

"I didn't want panic in the bus," she said.

Luna went outside, looked at the bus, went back inside and told people to wait for another bus.

The man then sat in the front seat and told her he was taking the bus.

"I was concerned about the people inside the bus. I told him, 'The bus has no brakes. If you take it, you'll crash,' " Luna said.

He asked why she cared about him. Luna replied she cared about him and her passengers.

"And he said, `Because you're a nice person, I'll let everybody live today.' "

After an argument with another passenger where he allegedly threatened to blow the bus up again, the man got off. Police arrived.

Another MTA bus took the rest of the passengers.

"All my patrons were thanking me for calling the police. I wanted to thank them. If they didn't tell me, I wouldn't know," Luna said.

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