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Deputies Arrest 'Most Prolific Tagger' at West LA Home

- Youth blamed for \$200,000 in graffiti damage

(Oct. 28, 2004) Sheriff's deputies arrested a youth, early Wednesday, who is suspected of causing more than \$200,000 in graffiti damage to Metro Buses in some 130 instances of vandalism over the past year.

Called "the most prolific graffiti tagger ever" by Sheriff's Lt. Mike Parker, the 17-year-old was taken into custody at his West Los Angeles home. The youth, whose name was not released, was booked and taken to Eastlake Juvenile Hall for housing.

In a warrant search of the residence, deputies said they found cans of spray paint, etching tools, "slap tag" labels and a journal showing the boy's alleged tagging moniker.

Deputies from the Transit Services Bureau's Special Problems Unit also found evidence they said indicated the youth had used his home computer to forge student bus passes and monthly stamps.

Accompanying Sheriff's deputies during Wednesday morning's raid was Paul Guile, security control manager for London's Tube Lines Ltd. Guile was in Los Angeles to learn first-hand about the Transit Services Bureau's efforts to battle graffiti vandalism on the Metro System.

In FY 2004, Metro spent more than \$7.8 million to repair graffiti vandalism damage to its fleet and facilities. Figures for FY 2005, which began July 1, show that graffiti costs already stand at \$1.9 million this fiscal year.