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Former Operator Charged with Fraud, False Imprisonment and Assault

By PAM MURANO

(Jan. 3, 2006) A former Metro Bus operator has been charged with felony insurance fraud, false imprisonment and assaulting a female bus patron.

Robert Hicks, who was terminated for misconduct in November, 2002, surrendered to authorities, Dec. 22, 2005, and was booked at the Sheriff's office in Palmdale. Bail was set at \$150,000.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled later this month in LA Superior Court.

Hicks had filed a Worker's Compensation claim in 2002 stating that he had been injured when the female patron assaulted him.

The female bus patron is a young woman, small in stature. Hicks is six feet tall and weighs some 400 pounds.

An investigation by Metro Risk Management's Special Investigations Unit (SIU), that included video evidence, found that there was reasonable cause to believe that Hicks was the aggressor and physically prevented the female patron from exiting the bus.

The California Department of Insurance Fraud Unit and the District Attorney's Office concurred with the SIU report and a warrant was issued for Hicks' arrest.