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Sheriff's Campaign Against Taggers Yields Payments and Conviction

By NED RACINE

(April 18, 2007) The Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau (TSB) campaign against taggers defacing Metro property yielded restitution payments and one conviction over the past two weeks.

As a first restitution payment for damages to the Metro Blue Line and Green Line rail cars, the agency received two checks totaling \$25,000 during a court appearance from the parents of Steven Gonzalez, a 25-year-old tagger convicted March 28. Gonzalez was also known as "Orgy."

The balance of \$15,486 will be paid in \$250 monthly installments starting in July 2007, when the defendant will be released from 180 days in Los Angeles County Jail.

Gonzalez was also sentenced to five years' formal parole, according to Sheriff's Sgt. Augie Pando. Any failure to pay the monthly installments will be reported by Metro to the court and probation department.

Tagger sentenced to prison

On April 5, William D. Figueroa, also know as "Dubsr," was found guilty of vandalism and sentenced to three years in state prison. Figueroa was charged with responsibility for 19 documented cases of vandalizing Metro Rapid buses.

Metro staff estimated the 19 episodes of vandalism cost the agency \$49,555. Figueroa admitted being known as "Dubsr" and being a member of UNOK (Unlike No Other Krew). He also told arresting officers he favored tagging the newer articulated buses.

When Sheriff's deputies served the search warrant at Figueroa's residence, they learned from family members that he was currently in custody on an unrelated vandalism case.

Figueroa had two previous arrests and a conviction for vandalism. While searching his residence, Sheriff's deputies found a considerable amount of evidence. Figueroa entered the California Correctional Institution at Tehachapi April 16.

Figueroa was identified as a result of TSB interviews with taggers. These interviews led to two additional taggers, now serving time in state prison.

