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Images taken from the closed circuit television system on the Green Line lead to an arrest.

Green Line Cameras Catch a Bold Metro Tagger

- Report from Green Line operator leads to arrest

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 1, 2008) The \$3,500 in damages 19-year-old tagger "Tanke" (sometimes "Tank") is suspected of causing on the Green Line doesn't rank high on the list of tagging damage, but his boldness caught Metro's attention.

Most who tag Metro's system avoid the closed circuit television cameras installed on the rail system. "Tanke" didn't. So when a Green Line train operator saw him tagging the inside of a coach, Rail Operations Control searched video footage and snagged his photo.

Green Line Rail Transportation Manager Michael Moore then took that information to Transit Services Bureau (TSB) officials and asked them to investigate the suspected tagger.



Damage to the operator window totaled \$3,500.

"He tagged the operator's window really badly – he went to town on that window," Moore said. "But it's not just Metro. He's left his mark on private property and on other public places. He got a billboard off the 710 [Long Beach] freeway . . . and you know that company might want some restitution, just as we do."

TSB Lt. Jenny Bethune said that the Sheriff's deputies were interested in arresting "Tanke" because he had so wantonly desecrated Metro property in broad daylight.

"It's not the dollar amount, but the fact that this guy was so bold to tag in front of patrons," Bethune said. "It intimidates customers and we can't allow criminals to use public areas like that."



TSB deputies arrested "Tanke" at his parent's home in South Los Angeles on June 26. *Photo by Jimmy Stroup*

Arresting the suspect

Fast forward to June 26, 7:13 a.m.

TSB deputies knocked on a door in South Los Angeles. The suspect, whose real name is William Poblano, was lead away in handcuffs while his mother and father looked on.

Inside the very clean house, deputies found evidence of tagging in Poblano's room and his brother's room. Poblano's room was littered with papers filled to the margins with "Tanke" written repeatedly.

On July 1, Poblano was charged with one felony count of vandalism. He remains in jail.

Deputies found "Tanke" based almost entirely on the information supplied to them by Green Line employees. Green Line Maintenance Specialist Dennis Nguyen tracked down the images that helped TSB find the tagger. Once the deputies had the image from the CCTV, Ely said it was "over."

"This was an easy one," Ely said. "Metro approached us with all that we needed – it was a no-brainer."