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Sheriff's Tagging Investigation Leads to 12 Arrests

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(Aug. 27, 2009) Seven adults and five juveniles accused of causing more than \$100,000 in vandalism to Metro property were arrested Aug. 19 following a two-month Los Angeles Sheriff's Department investigation, officials announced.

The alleged taggers are accused of tagging and damaging property along the 110 Harbor Freeway which is shared by the Harbor Busway, said Metro Transit Service Bureau Sheriff's Lt. Erik Ruble.

The tagging suspects are apparent members of the "ECM", or Evil Criminal Minds/Every Cops Misery street gang, he added.

Among those arrested was Jorge Medina, alleged leader of the group, who uses a moniker that begins with the letter "K," and who turned himself into police after the warrants were issued.

Deputies also confiscated three guns, marijuana plants, paint cans and stolen car parts that were apparently part of a "chop shop" operation.

"ECM is a tag-banging crew, meaning they have converted over to a criminal element," Ruble said.

There is, he said, a "military-style hierarchy as well as gang-style rituals," that include mandating new members be "jumped-in," he said. "Orders are sent down from higher ups to go hit-up the freeways."

The suspects are accused of being involved in 60 tagging incidents, mostly along the 110 and 91 (Gardena) Freeways.

The investigation was led by Los Angeles Sheriff's Deputy John Apostol along with teams from the North and South transit bureaus.

"John Apostol and his support staff worked very hard and put together a very difficult investigation in a short time," said Ruble.



Metro buses and property were vandalized with the alleged tagging crew moniker "ECM" (Evil Criminal Minds/Every Cops Misery) and "K" for the alleged leader. *Metro Transit Service Bureau photo*

