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**Quiet on the set:** Metro Film Manager Herman Hagan readies a location in the Metro Red/Purple mezzanine for a VISA commercial. *Photos by Gayle Anderson*

## Lights! Camera! Metro!

### Metro's Buses, Trains Still Great Backdrop for Movies, Commercials

By Michael D. White  
*Staff Writer*

For the better part of a century, Metro and its Los Angeles transit predecessors have provided the backdrop for scores of the most memorable – and, admittedly, some of the most forgettable – films ever made.

Take the 1994 thriller *Speed*, for example. Contrary to Hollywood lore, the famous scene with a frantic Sandra Bullock at the wheel of a booby-trapped bus wasn't filmed aboard a Metro vehicle, at all.

The scene was filmed aboard a Santa Monica Transit bus, while the film's subway shots were staged on the Metro Red Line.

In the 1920s, the legendary comedian Harold Lloyd produced and starred in four silent "flickers" featuring scenes incorporating Pacific Electric "Red Car" trolleys and Metropolitan Motor Bus coaches.

The most memorable, by far, was the 1924 classic – and appropriately named – *Off His Trolley*, which featured Lloyd as a hapless groom late for his own wedding dangling from the trolley pole of a moving PE car.

The scene is considered to this day to be among the best action scenes ever filmed, a trailblazer for such contemporary action films as *Collateral*,

*SWAT*, *L.A. Confidential*, and *Lethal Weapon II*, all of which utilized the service's of Metro's Film Office to coordinate their transit-related production activities.

"We currently get around 20 to 30 inquiries a month from various media about using Metro trains, buses and facilities. We wind up working with about half of those," says Metro Film Manager, Herman Hagan, adding that the scope of the agency's media exposure has grown beyond the Silver Screen to include television, magazine advertising and commercials.



Order Productions, above, stages the scene for a VISA commercial where extras exit a subway through Metro's newly installed turnstiles. Behind the scenes, Hagan briefs the film crew's security chief, Manny Berumen of Manny's Security. The VISA commercial was shot in the Union Station East Portal entrance to the Metro Red/Purple Line.

more> [Metro Film Credits](#)

Hagan joined the Metro Public Relations Department 16 years ago after a globe-trotting career as a lawyer, semi-pro basketball forward, San Diego police officer, and stockbroker.

Drawing on his legal experience, his purview includes acting as liaison with the entertainment industry on any activity involving Metro's bus and train fleet and all of its operating, administrative and maintenance facilities including the bustling Patsaouras Transit Plaza.

"It's fairly routine really, but each case has its own requirements that have to be carefully spelled out," he said, adding that a key element in the process is a meeting with Metro's Operations Department held a minimum of one week before the scheduled "shoot."

"We have to make sure that everyone's aware of how the planned activity will impact Metro's ability to serve its ridership," said Hagan, who makes a point of being at every shoot be it an advertising photo session for Porsche or an episode of the now-iconic TV series "24."

"I've had the opportunity to meet a lot of truly interesting people," says Hagen, who describes himself as an "10 or 11" handicap golfer with "the best job in the entire agency."