

OPBF DKER

There it was, bold as brass. Carved right into the paint. Graffiti.

Expensive, inconsiderate vandalism by some misfit that makes you want to ring the little guy's neck. Not the biggest crime of the century, but for Temple PM Deputy Bill Fenix, this one was galling. The carving was on the rear fender of his radio car.

Only an hour or so ago, he'd parked and locked the car to handle a call in Rosemead. After leaving the scene, he returned to the station for follow-up, and noticed the damage in the station parking lot. Make your blood boil?

The next morning, Deputy Art Valenzuela was in briefing looking at photos of the fender when the new lieutenant of 3 weeks, Joey Fennell, stalked in. "THIS IS #^\$&*^~*!!!. ... They can't do this to a radio car! I can't BELIEVE this!... This guy has to be in custody TODAY! We need to fix this NOW!"

Art was both surprised and excited by the energy that Lt. Fennell was investing in this. Almost as a reflex, and to calm the lieutenant down, Art and some of the other deputies found themselves responding with things like "Don't worry LT., we'll find him. He's going to jail..."

Neither the moniker nor the tagging "crew" name was familiar at Temple Station, so there was not much to go on. Nevertheless, that same morning, the 19-year old suspect was in custody, thanks to Deputy Art Valenzuela going 10-8 (in service) with a mindset about collaring whoever did it.

Art and his partner, Deputy Rob Whiteman, were checking the area where the crime had occurred when they obs'd (observed) an under-aged kid riding a motor scooter. The kid was 12, so Art and Rob escorted him the few blocks to his house in order to notify his parent/guardian.

Upon arrival, Art was immediately impressed. *Wow, check out all the "artwork" on the curb and sidewalk in front of this house. Wouldn't it be funny if...*

After explaining to "Grandma" about the 12-year old's violation, Art casually asked who else lived with her. She rattled off the names of 4 juvies and one adult, whereupon Art asked if he and his partner could look around. She said yes, signed a waiver, and sure enough, in one kid's bedroom Art found an envelope with markings that looked plenty enough like what was on the radio car.

Art called for Field Sgt. Gus Stilgenbauer and the digital camera. Sgt. Stilgenbauer arrived and immediately recognized that OPBF DKER was what had recently been carved into numerous items of Rosemead city property from the Rio Hondo to the Temple City line.

Art interviewed the 4th grade brother of the suspect at the home. As in the saying “Out of the mouths of babes...” the boy laid out his brother as “DKER” and said “I don’t know why he writes his name on everyone’s stuff!”

Art and Rob found the suspect that morning at his continuation school (any surprises there?) They let him know he’d been “made” and Art asked him...

“So, kid, what’s up with the OBPF DKER?”

“I’m DKER,” the kid bragged.

“Well, what’s OBPF stand for?”

“Beats me,” answered the mental giant.

“Ok, what gave you the idea of tagging a cop car?”

“My buddies dared me to!”

“Well, dare this, buddy.” Click, click. (sound of handcuffs closing)

So ended the “reign of terror” of *DKER*. And with Lt. Joey Fennell smiling again, Art and Rob finished booking and went 10-8.