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NEWS RELEASE

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## **Convicted Killer Found Guilty of Kidnapping, Sexual Assault of Woman in Lancaster**

A 48-year-old convicted killer was found guilty today of sexually assaulting and attempting to kill a woman in Lancaster, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

A jury found Leonard Earl Bales of Palmdale guilty of one count each of forcible oral copulation; kidnapping to commit oral copulation; attempted willful, deliberate and premeditated murder; criminal threats; assault with a deadly weapon, belt; false imprisonment by violence and assault with intent to commit oral copulation.

The jury also found true allegations of kidnapping, tying and binding, great bodily injury and personally using a deadly or dangerous weapon.

Bales was convicted in 1998 of killing a woman in Lancaster and was sentenced to 18 years in state prison.

Sentencing is scheduled on Feb. 3 in Department A21 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Antelope Valley Branch. Bales faces 90 years to life in state prison.

Case MA067063 was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorneys Carolyn Yeh and K. Sam Abourched.

According to testimony during the weeklong trial, the defendant strangled the woman into unconsciousness, kidnapped her and took her to a vacant house in Quartz Hill early in the morning of Sept. 26 and proceeded to drag, tie and bind and sexually assault the 35-year-old victim.

After the attack, the woman managed to escape from her bindings and ran naked from the vacant house and found a neighbor that provided shelter and called police, the prosecutor added.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Lancaster Station.

## **About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.