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NEWS RELEASE

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Feb. 18, 2020

## **Woman Pleads Guilty to Manslaughter For 1993 Fire That Killed Seven Children, Three Adults**

A woman pleaded guilty today to voluntary manslaughter for an arson fire at a Westlake apartment building in 1993 that killed 10 people, seven of whom were children, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Johanna Lopez (dob 5/19/65) entered her plea to two counts of voluntary manslaughter. She faces 22 years in state prison when she is scheduled to be sentenced on June 19.

On February 7, co-defendant Joseph Monge (dob 3/12/75) pleaded guilty to one count of voluntary manslaughter and admitted a gang allegation. He is expected to be sentenced to 11 years in state prison on June 19.

A third defendant, Ramiro Valerio (dob 7/12/73) faces 12 counts of murder as well as the special circumstance allegations of multiple murders and murder in the commission of an arson. He faces life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Valerio is scheduled to return to court on March 20 for a pretrial hearing.

Deputy District Attorneys Victor Avila of the Major Crimes Division, Catherine Chon of the Organized Crime Division and Adan Montalban of the Hardcore Gang Division are prosecuting the case.

Prosecutors contend the three defendants caused the fire because they were upset when the manager of the apartment complex and others wanted to stop drug deals in the building.

The apartment manager was moving furniture on May 3, 1993, when a mattress that was in a hallway was set on fire and smoke from the flames spread throughout the complex.

Seven children and three women, two of whom were pregnant, died from smoke inhalation. Dozens of others were injured.

Case BA454331 was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department's Robbery-Homicide Division.

**[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.