

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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Man Convicted of Murder in Child's Death

A jury today found a man guilty of killing his girlfriend's 16-month-old son while she was at work, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Deputy District Attorney Taraneh Saba said the jury deliberated for four and a half hours before convicting Stephen Douglas Hoffman, 24, of second-degree murder and assault on a child causing death.

The defendant is scheduled to be sentenced April 4 at the Los Angeles County Superior Court in Pomona before Judge Thomas C. Falls. Hoffman faces a maximum sentence of 25 years to life in state prison.

The prosecutor said on Aug. 13, 2011 Hoffman was watching his girlfriend's baby, Malaikye Payne, while she was at work on an overnight shift.

At around 2:20 a.m., Hoffman texted the mother an image of the boy with a developing bruise on his face. Hoffman told her that the child fell off the bed and onto a toy.

The mother returned home after work and went to bed at 6 a.m. Three hours later, she was alerted by Hoffman that Malaikye was having difficulty breathing and she called 911.

Saba said the child was brain dead upon arrival at the hospital. He was taken off life-support on Aug. 15, 2011.

A few months after the child died, Hoffman changed his story and said the child was jumping on the bed and fell on the floor, the prosecutor added.

Coroner's officials testified in court that the child sustained as many as 21 blows to the head. Additionally, doctors from the hospital said during the trial that it was one of the worst injuries they had seen on a child.

Seven months after Malaikye died, Hoffman was arrested in connection with his death.

The case was investigated by the Azusa Police Department and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau.

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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 seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Annually, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecutes more than 60,000 felonies and 140,000 misdemeanor crimes.