

Jackie Lacey

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NEWS RELEASE

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Woman Sentenced For Her Role in Fatal Carjacking

A 22-year-old woman was sentenced today to 11 years in state prison for her role in a fatal carjacking four years ago, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Misty Ruiz of Los Angeles pleaded no contest in October to one felony count of carjacking and admitted a special allegation that she used a deadly and dangerous weapon, a car, during the commission of the crime.

Deputy District Attorney Robert Villa, who prosecuted the case, said on Jan. 13, 2012, Ruiz and her co-defendant, Brian Mendez, met 56-year-old Efrain Perez-Ortiz at a liquor store.

The three drank alcohol in Perez-Ortiz's truck, the prosecutor said, but then later decided to go to the victim's home in Huntington Park to pick up some things. All three drove together in the victim's truck and while Perez-Ortiz was inside the home, the defendants devised a plan for Ruiz to offer sex to the victim and then rob him of his paycheck.

When the victim returned to the car, Ruiz propositioned herself to the victim, but he refused to hand over his money, according to the prosecutor.

Mendez then hit Perez-Ortiz, the prosecutor said, and the victim got out of the car. Mendez and Ruiz also exited the vehicle and beat the victim.

The two defendants then got back into the victim's truck and Mendez ran over Perez-Ortiz, who was immediately crushed, the prosecutor said.

Mendez, 25, was convicted earlier this month of one count each of murder, attempted second-degree robbery and carjacking. Jurors also found true the special circumstance allegations that the murder was carried out during the commission of a robbery and carjacking.

Mendez is scheduled to be sentenced on April 6 in Department H of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Norwalk Branch. He faces a possible maximum sentence of life in state prison without the possibility of parole.

Case VA127484 was investigated by the Huntington Park Police Department.

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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.