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NEWS RELEASE

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**Man Found Guilty of Kidnapping,  
Sexually Assaulting Two Lancaster Teens**

A jury has found a 42-year-old man guilty of kidnapping and sexually assaulting two teenage girls in Lancaster within a one-month period last year, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Joseph Kenneth Cornett was found guilty late yesterday of a total of 15 felony counts: two counts each of kidnapping to commit rape, lewd act upon a child and forcible rape of child victim over 14; one count each of assault with intent to commit rape of a victim under 18, assault with intent to commit sodomy by use of force of a victim under 18, sexual penetration by foreign object of minor 14 or older by means of violence, assault by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury and furnishing marijuana to minor over 14; and four counts of threatening force or violence against an executive officer.

Cornett also was found guilty of three misdemeanor counts of resisting arrest and one misdemeanor count of possession of PCP. The jury found true allegations that the crimes were committed against multiple victims and that the victims were children 14 or older.

Case MA065982 was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorneys Jon Hatami and Scott Yang.

The defendant will face more than 80 years to life in state prison at a sentencing hearing scheduled for April 28 in Department 111 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

On April 13, 2015, Cornett gave a 15-year-old girl a ride but then prevented her from leaving the car, according to evidence presented at the four-week long trial. The defendant then drove her to a deserted area on the far east side of Lancaster and sexually assaulted her twice, the prosecutors said.

More than two weeks later, on May 6, 2015, Cornett approached another 15-year-old girl who was walking home from school, the prosecutors added. He claimed to be a police officer and stated that he was going to arrest her for jaywalking, according to witness testimony. The defendant then coerced the girl into his car and drove her to some abandoned temporary mobile classrooms near Lancaster

Boulevard and 40th Street. Cornett then forced the girl into one of the classrooms and sexually assaulted her, according to the evidence presented in court.

The victim managed to flee and was helped by a group of people that were in a nearby church. The evidence presented at trial showed Cornett attempted to escape the area but could not get away because his vehicle became stuck in the sand. During his arrest, the defendant fought seven officers attempting to arrest him and spat at them.

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

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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 protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.