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NEWS RELEASE

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Man Sentenced to Prison for La Puente Killing

A 37-year-old man was sentenced today to 15 years to life in state prison for fatally beating a homeless man nearly two years ago, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

At today's court appearance, Marco Antonio Villanueva pleaded no contest to second-degree murder in case KA106377. The defendant also admitted a special allegation that he personally used deadly and dangerous weapons, a bucket and hammer, during the commission of the crime.

Prosecutors said on June 18, 2014, a passerby discovered victim Ruben Zermeno's body near a trash dumpster in the 13900 block of Valley Boulevard in La Puente.

The 56-year-old victim died from blunt force trauma as a result of being stomped on and beaten, prosecutors said.

Authorities began a homicide investigation and questioned Villanueva about the killing, prosecutors said.

When Villanueva was taken into custody, he admitted to investigators that he got mad at the victim for taking his spot near the dumpster and as a result, struck Zermeno with a hammer, prosecutors added.

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