

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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Man Pleads Not Guilty to 2011 Pomona Murder

A one-time fugitive charged in a 2011 gang murder pleaded not guilty today, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Deputy District Attorney Thuy Pham said Ruben Vargas (dob 10/10/76) was charged with one count of murder, one count of attempted murder, two counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm, and one count of shooting at an inhabited dwelling in case KA093110.

The felony complaint includes a special allegation that the defendant personally and intentionally discharged a handgun, which caused great bodily injury and death. Additionally, the charging document alleges that the crime was committed for the benefit and at the direction of, and in association with a criminal street gang, and with the intent to promote, further, and assist in criminal conduct by gang members.

Vargas appeared before Commissioner Wade Olson at the Los Angeles County Superior Court in Pomona and his bail was set at \$1 million.

On Jan. 4, 2011, Lina Romero, 31, was inside a residence when she was hit by gunfire coming from outside. She was taken to a medical center for treatment, and died a month later. Another woman also was in the home during the shooting, but was unhurt, the prosecutor said.

Nine days later, Andrew Alvarez, 25, was arrested in connection with the killing. He pleaded no contest to voluntary manslaughter and assault with a deadly weapon and sentenced to 25 years and four months in state prison.

Although authorities believed Vargas also was involved in the fatal shooting, he fled the United States to Mexico shortly after the killing. Officials ultimately located him and he was brought back to the U.S. on Dec. 17, 2013.

Vargas' next court appearance is scheduled for July 24 for a preliminary hearing at the Pomona Courthouse in Department F. If convicted as charged, he faces a maximum sentence of life in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Pomona Police 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 seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.