

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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Man Charged in Connection with La Puente Killing

A 35-year-old man charged with the death of a homeless man pleaded not guilty late yesterday, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Marco Antonio Villanueva (dob 12/30/78) was charged with one count of murder in case KA106377. The defendant appeared before Judge Jack Hunt at the Los Angeles County Superior Court in Pomona and his bail was set at \$1 million.

Deputy District Attorney Duke Chau, who is assigned to the case, said on June 18 passersby discovered Ruben Zermeno's body near a trash bin in La Puente.

The 56-year-old victim had suffered major trauma to his head and face, the prosecutor said. Law enforcement was alerted about the death and detectives began a homicide investigation.

Authorities located a witness that linked Villanueva to the fatal beating and, a week later, the defendant was charged in connection with the killing.

The defendant's next court appearance is scheduled for July 23 at the Los Angeles County Superior Court in Pomona in Department N.

If convicted as charged, Villanueva faces a maximum sentence of 15 years to life in state prison.

The case remains under investigation by the 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. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.