

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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**Palmdale Man Pleads No Contest to Murder
in Fatal Beating of 2-Year-Old Girl**

A Palmdale man has pleaded no contest to a charge that he fatally beat his girlfriend's 2-year-old daughter last September, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Matthew Worthen, 24, entered his plea yesterday to one count of second-degree murder before Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Kathleen Blanchard. Worthen made his plea shortly before jury selection was set to begin.

Worthen is scheduled to return to court Sept. 8 when he is expected to be sentenced to 15 years to life in prison.

Prosecutors said Worthen assaulted the toddler on Sept. 22 when the child was left in his care for only a few minutes. When the child's mother returned home, the girl appeared to be having difficulty breathing and was taken to an area hospital where she died.

Deputy District Attorneys Seth Carmack and Ted Swanson prosecuted the case.

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 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.