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NEWS RELEASE

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Koreatown Smoke Shop Worker to Stand Trial for Fatally Stabbing Customer

A Koreatown smoke shop employee has been held to answer on a capital murder charge for the stabbing of a customer at the business last year, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge George G. Lomeli yesterday ordered Vardan Tokmajyan (dob 3/13/94) of Glendale to stand trial on one count of murder with the special circumstance allegation that the crime was committed during a kidnapping. The charge includes an allegation of using a deadly and dangerous weapon, a knife.

Case BA468019 was filed on May 14, 2018, and Tokmajyan pleaded not guilty. A second arraignment is scheduled on Oct. 24 in Department 100 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

On May 10, 2018, victim Jai Carter, 24, of Los Angeles was in the smoke shop at 4th Street and Vermont Avenue when the defendant accused him of shoplifting, according to testimony at the preliminary hearing. Tokmajyan allegedly locked the door, pulled a knife and demanded money from Carter.

Then while the victim was sitting on the floor, Tokmajyan allegedly stabbed him in the chest without provocation, according to testimony.

The victim was able to unlock the door and run away but died on a sidewalk a short distance away.

If convicted as charged, Tokmajyan faces a possible maximum sentence of death or life in state prison without the possibility of parole. A decision on whether to seek the death penalty will be made at a later date.

The defendant is being held without bail.

Deputy District Attorneys Ani Artsvelyan and Paul Przelomiec are the assigned prosecutors.

The case remains under investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department, West Bureau.

[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.