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NEWS RELEASE

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**Trio to Stand Trial For
1993 Apartment Fire That Killed 10**

Two gang members and a woman were ordered today to stand trial for a decades-old arson fire at a Westlake apartment building, killing 10 people, seven of whom were children, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Ramiro Valerio, 44, Joseph Monge, 42, and Johanna Lopez, 52, were held to answer on 12 counts of murder as well as the special circumstance allegations of multiple murders and murder in the commission of an arson. They are scheduled to be arraigned on Nov. 3.

Deputy District Attorneys Victor Avila of the Major Crimes Division, Catherine Chon of the Organized Crime Division and Adan Montalban of the Hardcore Gang Division are prosecuting the case.

Prosecutors contend the three defendants caused the fire because they were upset when the manager of the apartment complex and others wanted to stop drug deals in the building.

The apartment manager was moving furniture on May 3, 1993, when a mattress that was in a hallway was set on fire and smoke from the flames spread throughout the complex.

Seven children and three women, two of whom were pregnant, died from smoke inhalation. Dozens of others were injured.

If convicted as charged, the three defendants could face the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole. A decision on whether to seek capital punishment will be made at a later date.

Case BA454331 was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department's Robbery-Homicide Division.

[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.