

Jackie Lacey

District Attorney

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NEWS RELEASE

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Oct. 27, 2017

Former State Inspector Charged With Accepting Bribes From LA County Barbershop Owners

A former state inspector has been charged with accepting about \$12,000 in bribes from barbershop and salon owners in exchange for not reporting violations to a regulatory board, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Michell DeGrate (dob 12/18/67) was charged in case BA462094 with 13 counts of bribery. She is expected to be arraigned today in Department 30 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

Deputy District Attorney Susan Ser of the Public Integrity Division is prosecuting the case.

DeGrate worked as an inspector for the California Department of Consumer Affairs Board of Barbering and Cosmetology. She visited various businesses to ensure they complied with state health and safety laws and licensing requirements.

DeGrate allegedly began targeting barbershops and nail and hair salons in her inspection territory last year. She is accused of demanding cash from owners and employees in exchange for not reporting any violations if they paid her. In some instances, workers made monthly payments to DeGrate, the prosecutor said.

The case was filed for warrant on Oct. 24.

Prosecutors are recommending bail be set at \$325,000. If convicted as charged, DeGrate faces up to 16 years in state prison.

The case remains under investigation by the California Department of Consumer Affairs.

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.