



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIVISION

JACKIE LACEY • District Attorney
SHARON J. MATSUMOTO • Chief Deputy District Attorney

JEAN GUCCIONE • Director

CONTACT:

Shiara Davila-Morales, Chief
Media Relations Division
213-974-3525

Oct. 30, 2013

Former Funeral Home Employee Charged with Theft of Human Remains

A former apprentice embalmer accused of taking gold crowns from human remains at a Lancaster funeral home is scheduled to be arraigned this afternoon on more than two dozen felony counts, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Deputy District Attorney John Evans said Pete Jacob Lara, 39 (dob 12-27-73), is expected to be arraigned in Department A1 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Antelope Valley Branch. Lara is charged in case MA061206.

Lara is charged with one count each of possession of a controlled substance, methamphetamine; removal or possession of dental gold from human remains; and grand theft by embezzlement. He also faces 23 counts of second-degree commercial burglary.

Lara is a former employee of Halley-Olsen-Murphy Funeral Home in Lancaster. While working as an apprentice embalmer, the defendant allegedly took gold crowns from bodies and other items including a cremation urn box and medallions used to decorate urn boxes worth more than \$1,000.

Prosecutors said Lara went on to pawn the stolen goods at pawn shops and jewelry exchanges. The alleged crimes took place between June 25, 2012 and October 28, 2013.

Lara's bail is recommended at \$510,000. The case remains under investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

If convicted as charged, Lara faces a maximum sentence of 19 years in state prison.

###

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. Annually, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecutes more than 60,000 felonies and 140,000 misdemeanor crimes.