

# Jackie Lacey

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NEWS RELEASE

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## **Reseda man sentenced in girlfriend's killing**

A man convicted of killing his girlfriend at their Reseda apartment was sentenced today to state prison, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Deputy District Attorney Sharon Ransom of the Van Nuys Branch Office said James Howard Jr., 23, was sentenced to 56 years to life.

Howard was convicted on Sept. 25 of the first-degree murder of Sharilit Matthews, 41. Jurors found true a special allegation that the defendant used a deadly and dangerous weapon, a knife, in the commission of the offense.

The jury also found true an allegation that Howard had a prior strike conviction for a robbery in 2009.

At today's hearing, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge James Brandolino denied a motion for a new trial.

After serving a prison term for the 2009 robbery, Howard moved in with the victim in August 2011. During the time that the couple lived together, neighbors reported hearing yelling and arguing from their apartment, according to trial testimony.

Coworkers and a friend testified at the nearly four-week trial that they saw bruises on the victim on various occasions. Matthews' body was discovered eight days after her murder when police conducted a welfare check.

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