

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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**Retired Border Patrol Agent
Sentenced for Murder, Torture**

A retired border patrol agent has been sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for his role in the killing and torture of a 29-year-old woman in 2010, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Nerio Celaya, 44, of Calexico was sentenced yesterday. He was found guilty of one count each of first-degree murder and torture in case PA066593 on April 7.

The jury also found true a special circumstance allegation of torture.

His cousin and codefendant, Louie Alex Mendoza, 38, of Sylmar was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole on May 30 after also being found guilty of murder and torture. A special circumstance allegation of torture was found true as well for Mendoza.

Mendoza was dating the victim and suspected her of stealing from him, according to evidence presented at trial. On Jan. 12, 2010, Mendoza and Celaya both held the woman down and beat her to death at Painful Pleasures, an Arleta tattoo shop managed by Celaya, according to court testimony.

The victim's injuries included facial lacerations, having her teeth knocked out and a fractured skull. After the victim was beaten to death, both defendants hog-tied her with duct tape and dumped her body in a trash can which they planned to burn and then bury, prosecutors said.

Deputy District Attorney Elena Abramson prosecuted the case.

The investigation was handled by the Los Angeles Police Department, Mission Division.

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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. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.