

Jackie Lacey

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NEWS RELEASE

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Men arraigned in asphyxiation death, arson

Two men accused of strangling a man, then setting him ablaze were arraigned yesterday, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office announced.

Adrian Berumen, 18 (dob 06/21/1995), of Long Beach, and Jose Angel Martinez, 18 (dob 01/09/1995), of Compton, pleaded not guilty to one count each of murder and arson with allegations that the defendants personally used a deadly and dangerous weapon, a mini baseball bat.

The two men, charged in case NA095527, are being held on more than \$1 million bail. They are expected to appear on Jan. 31 for a pre-trial hearing in Department 19 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Long Beach Branch.

Deputy District Attorney Julian Recana said that on April 23, 2013, Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies responded to a call regarding a fire at a basketball court in Rancho Palos Verdes.

As the fire was extinguished, officials found a body in the back of a vehicle. The person was identified as Christopher Waters, 42, who was the registered owner of the burned car.

Recana said Waters' body was bound at the feet and neck. Evidence presented at the one-day preliminary hearing revealed that the victim was killed by asphyxiation before he was put in the car and set on fire.

Soon after the incident, Berumen turned himself in to authorities, Recana said, and during the investigation it was determined that Martinez participated in the killing.

According to preliminary hearing testimony, during the investigation, authorities discovered Waters' dry blood in the garage at Berumen's home and investigators said they believe the victim was killed in the garage. Berumen and Martinez had a business relationship with the victim and had hired him to provide silk-screen t-shirts before they killed him, the prosecutor said.

In addition to Waters' murder, Berumen also faces an attempted murder charge on an unrelated case. If convicted as charged, Berumen and Martinez face a minimum of 15 years to life in prison.

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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.