

*Report to the People
2013-2014*



Jackie Lacey
District Attorney

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Report to the People



Jackie Lacey
Los Angeles County
District Attorney



Message from the District Attorney

When I was sworn into office on Dec. 3, 2012, I set goals for my administration.

They included:

- Safeguarding our seniors from financial abuse;
- Protecting our environment and ensuring worker safety;
- Combating high-technology crimes; and
- Expanding alternative sentencing courts.

As you will read in this report, we have made great strides in reaching our goals by collaborating with public and private agencies to expand our scope.

We joined forces with service organizations to educate seniors about common scams aimed at taking their money. We established an **OSHA and Environmental Crimes Rollout Program** to provide extra support for investigative agencies. We formed partnerships with financial institutions to better investigate and prosecute cybercrimes. And we worked with judges and defense attorneys to expand the criteria for drug courts.

Implementing State Mandates

Other important issues arose, often as the result of legislative or voter action. My office began reviewing petitions filed by more than 1,200 inmates serving life sentences under **Proposition 36**, the voter initiative that cut sentences for some third-strike offenders.

We also continued the implementation of Assembly Bill 109, the **Public Safety Realignment Act**, which shifted thousands of state prisoners to local jails. We pushed for and received a new statewide definition of “recidivism,” a bureaucratic but essential first step in determining whether crime rates change as a result of AB109.

We took an aggressive stance in trying to stop the release of Christopher Hubbart, a notorious serial rapist, into our county. The judge’s decision to allow Hubbart’s conditional release to the Palmdale area was appealed all the way to the California Supreme Court. Unfortunately, we lost the battle but we did not give up.

Undeterred, we went to Sacramento and sponsored legislation to change the law. The next time a **sexually violent predator** was scheduled for release anywhere in California, the affected county was to be notified and given the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process.

Late in 2014, my office provided vital leadership in the implementation of **Proposition 47**. The voter initiative reduced some felony drug-related offenses to misdemeanors, allowed the resentencing of certain convicts and created a new shoplifting crime. As a result of our efforts, thousands of prosecutors and law enforcement personnel across the state received video training on these changes within hours of the new law's enactment.

Prosecuting Violent Crime

Although violent crime in Los Angeles County continued at an all-time low, I remain committed to maintaining public safety through the prosecution of dangerous criminals.

My office tried 290 murder and attempted murder cases involving **hardcore gang** members in 2013-2014, with a conviction rate of 92 percent.

In one of the most closely watched cases, a gang member was sentenced to 40 years to life in prison for the attempted murder of four people at a Halloween party on the University of Southern California campus.

To protect minors, my office prosecuted cases of child sexual abuse and human trafficking. In fact, the number of human trafficking charges we filed nearly tripled between 2013 and 2014.

We created a special **Human Trafficking Unit** that focused on putting pimps behind bars and protecting their victims – some of whom were branded by their captors with tattoos for easy identification. In one case, a man was sentenced to 36 years in prison for human sex trafficking and sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl.

Protecting the Public

Beginning in 2013, we worked closely with federal, state and local law enforcement to focus more resources on the investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes. That year, my office hosted its first **High Tech Fraud Symposium**, drawing more than 300 people.

We also sustained efforts to hold public officials accountable under the law. I believe these efforts are essential to maintaining public trust in government. In 2014, seven former Bell city officials were sentenced for their roles in the most significant public corruption case prosecuted in Los Angeles County in more than a decade.

As District Attorney, I am proud to lead the **Criminal Justice Mental Health Project** for Los Angeles County. We began with a summit that brought together more than 125 delegates from government agencies and community-based organizations to assess the current system.

Project members began drafting a comprehensive mental health diversion plan that provides alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders.

Serving Los Angeles County

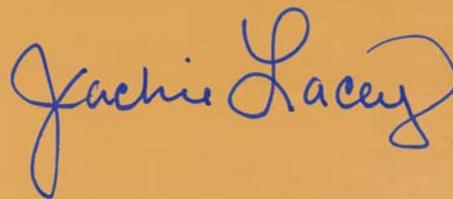
As many of you know, I grew up in South Los Angeles and graduated from Dorsey High School. In those days, I could not have dreamed that I one day would serve the people of Los Angeles County as their elected District Attorney.

I am humbled and gratified by their support for me and this office.

I also am privileged to serve as the first female and the first African-American District Attorney in Los Angeles County since the office was established in 1850.

My first two years as District Attorney have been extremely busy and exhilarating. I want to thank all of the people in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for their hard work and dedication to the pursuit of justice.

It is my honor to serve as the leader of this distinguished organization and to serve as the elected District Attorney of this great county. I will continue to do my best to represent the interests of the residents of Los Angeles County and keep them safe.



Safeguarding Elders from Financial Abuse

One of District Attorney Jackie Lacey's top priorities was to safeguard elders from financial crimes.

For District Attorney Lacey, the mission was personal. Her mother was scammed by a man claiming to be a police officer and demanding money to bail her grandson out of a foreign jail.



District Attorney Lacey and her mother, Addie, appear in a public service announcement on financial scams targeting seniors.

On March 31, 2014, District Attorney Lacey launched an award-winning public education campaign in partnership with the Rotary Club of Los Angeles, also known as LA5. The District Attorney's Office trained and equipped Rotary Club volunteers to educate seniors on how to protect themselves against fraud.



Belle Chen, deputy-in-charge of the Elder Abuse Section, addresses the District Attorney's Elder Abuse Symposium.

As part of the campaign, District Attorney Lacey and her mother made a public service announcement warning elders about the dangers of financial scams.

The District Attorney's Office also created a new pamphlet, *Safeguarding Your Future*, filled with tips to help seniors avoid being defrauded. Thousands

of these *new pamphlets* were distributed to elders through the Rotary Club of Los Angeles in collaboration with the Salvation Army and Meals on Wheels.

For these efforts, the District Attorney's Elder Financial Abuse Outreach Campaign was presented in October 2014 with the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission's Top Ten Award and Plain Language Award.

To enhance the investigation and prosecution of financial crimes against seniors, the Elder Abuse Section was moved to the White Collar Crime Division.

The Elder Abuse Section also conducted symposiums, at which deputy district attorneys, law enforcement personnel, caretakers and others discussed how to prevent and prosecute fraud and financial crimes against seniors.

Tips to Avoid Consumer Fraud

DON'T

- Buy anything over the phone unless you called first.
- Share any personal information with unsolicited callers.
- Wire money to strangers, even if the person claims to be a police officer or public official.
- Unlock or open doors to unknown or uninvited visitors.
- Let strangers in your home or in your backyard.
- Give contractors a down payment that is more than \$1,000 or 10 percent.
- Open any e-mail from an unknown sender.

DO

- Screen your calls through an answering machine or caller ID.
- Hang up the phone if you don't know the caller.
- Shred unwanted past credit card bills, investment records, insurance policies, tax records, etc.
- Use peepholes or intercoms to identify visitors.
- Call the police if a stranger lingers or refuses to leave.
- Verify the identity of strangers before starting a business transaction or making a donation.

The District Attorney's Office trained more than 100 law enforcement officers from 20 agencies on how to investigate financial scams. Along with education, the office also aggressively prosecuted those who victimized older constituents. Those cases included:

"Sweetheart scam" targeted senior

Myrta Molina used a "sweetheart scam," in which the victim was made to believe he was in a romantic relationship when actually he was being targeted by a financial predator. Molina stole thousands of dollars from the 81-year-old man whom she met through a personal ad. She was sentenced to 248 days in jail, five years of probation and ordered to pay \$6,500 in restitution.

Officer convicted of abusing father

Dennis Alva was an Irwindale police officer when he stole \$250,000 that was hidden in his 84-year-old father's garage. He was sentenced to a year in jail, five years of probation and ordered to pay back the money.

Woman stole \$100,000 from elders

Vacie Thomas was the executive assistant at the NAACP's Los Angeles office when she befriended an elderly couple. She added her name as a joint tenant to the couple's million-dollar home and forged numerous checks. She also stole from a 97-year-old woman. Thomas pleaded no contest to two counts of theft from an elder and was sentenced to three years in state prison and ordered to repay more than \$100,000.

Insurance broker guilty of theft from aunt

As an insurance broker, Myles Seishin Hanashiro sold an annuity to his elderly aunt and then forged her signature to steal more than \$100,000 from her life insurance. He was convicted of theft from an elder, paid back all the money stolen and was sentenced to probation and 100 hours of community service.

Man charged with scamming older motorists

David Stevens was charged with scamming an 85-year-old man. He claimed the man caused a traffic collision and needed to pay thousands of dollars in compensation. Further investigation revealed more victims, ranging in age from 62 to 92, of the same scam. Stevens was ordered to stand trial on 22 felony counts, including first-degree burglary, theft from an elder and extortion. If convicted as charged, he faced more than 18 years in prison.



Combating High-Technology Crimes

In response to the rapidly evolving world of technology and the criminals who exploit it, the High Technology Crime Division aimed to stem the proliferation of various cybercrimes, such as identity theft, credit and debit card fraud, and computer hacking.

Not only did the division work collaboratively with other law enforcement agencies, but it also provided forensic services and technical support for the growing caseload.

The District Attorney's Office forged new partnerships with such agencies as gas retailers Chevron and Shell to combat credit card theft. The companies implemented new protocols and added better security measures to prevent criminals from installing skimming devices at their gas pumps.

District Attorney Jackie Lacey recognized the gas retailers for their efforts at the inaugural High Tech Fraud Symposium on Oct. 10, 2013. The next year, the symposium focused on cyberattacks against banks and their customers.

At that event, City National Bank was lauded for aiding criminal investigations by sharing information about fraud activity and showing where vulnerabilities might exist. District Attorney Lacey said the partnership changed the way prosecutors handled credit card fraud cases.

In the keynote address at the 6th annual Information Security Summit, District Attorney Lacey also spoke of working with various

organizations and law enforcement agencies to establish a central command center to gather information on cyberthreats.

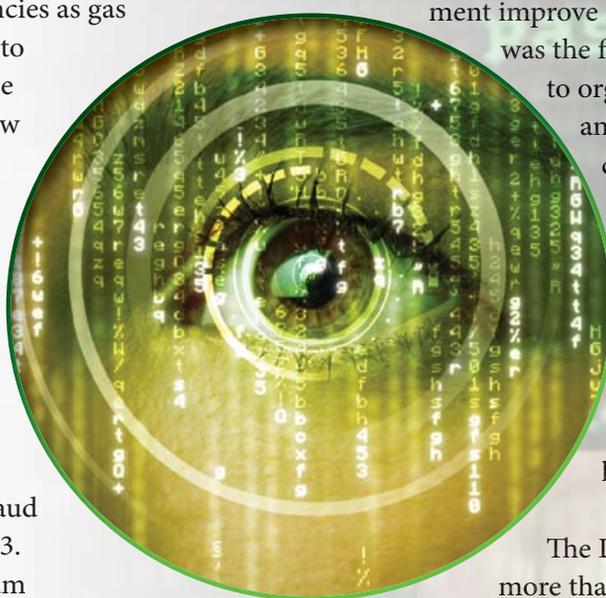
Whenever there was an attack on Los Angeles County's computer infrastructure, the District Attorney's Cyber Investigation Response Team (CIRT) was tapped to resolve security breaches. The squad responded to an increasing number of cyberthreats on county computer systems.

The team's mission was two-fold: to determine who launched the attack and to help the affected department improve its security measures. CIRT was the first of its kind in the nation to organize and train similar units and has served as a model for cyberpolice.

In March 2013, CIRT investigators were honored with the Countywide Information Security Recognition Program Award for its work in a half-dozen probes.

The Digital Forensic Lab examined more than 1,600 items containing electronic evidence such as computers and automobile global positioning systems.

The experts assigned to the lab assisted in the investigation of a range of crimes – not just those handled by the High Technology Crime Division. They uncovered key e-mails in the city of Bell public corruption case and crucial evidence against two juveniles charged with conspiracy to commit murder at South Pasadena High School.



What is Identity Theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone uses another person's name, Social Security number or other personal information to get credit cards, loans or access to financial accounts.

Tips to Avoid Identity Theft

- Shred all unwanted mail as soon as it is received.
- Lock financial documents and records in a safe.
- Never leave mail in your home mailbox for pickup.
- Be careful about giving out personal information.
- Before discarding a computer or cell phone, delete all personal information.
- Use strong passwords.
- Do not share passwords.
- Do not post too much personal information on social media websites.

Some of the cases the High Technology Crime Division prosecuted included:

Man convicted in synthetic ID scheme

Deon Mimbs pleaded guilty to running a synthetic identity scheme, in which IDs were created by combining real Social Security numbers with fictional people. Credit histories then were created for the synthetic IDs as well as credit scores. The synthetic IDs eventually were removed from the good accounts and each synthetic ID appeared to be a real person with a good credit score. Mimbs was sentenced to 13 years in prison and ordered to pay more than \$1.7 million in restitution.

Man sentenced to prison for cyberattacks on law enforcement

Steven Grant Almeida pleaded no contest to waging cyberattacks on several law enforcement officials, including a judge and the Beverly Hills police chief. Almeida managed to use the officials' personal information to shut off electricity at their homes. He was sentenced to eight years in prison.

Grocer convicted in food stamp scheme

Grocery store owner Solomon Berhane pleaded no contest to illegally redeeming more than \$3.7 million worth of food stamp benefits. Berhane allowed customers to exchange food stamps for cash, cigarettes or alcohol. He redeemed the benefits and placed the funds in a bank account using a false name. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Two charged for tax-refund fraud

A 79-count complaint was filed against two people for a tax-refund fraud scheme involving TriStar, Los Angeles County's third-party administrator for employee disability claims. The pair was charged with obtaining prepaid debit cards in the victims' names, filing tax returns and getting refunds. Losses exceeded \$1 million.



Protecting the Environment, Workers

Through a series of groundbreaking initiatives, District Attorney Jackie Lacey strengthened efforts to protect the environment, ensure worker safety and successfully prosecute those who violate the law.

On April 17, 2014, District Attorney Lacey announced the launch of the OSHA and Environmental Crimes Rollout Program at a news conference.



The program dispatched specially trained deputy district attorneys and district attorney investigators to the scenes of environmental threats and industrial accidents involving occupational deaths or serious injuries. It was intended to enhance the preservation of evidence and ensure that witness accounts were documented.

“This program is designed to protect the health and safety of all Los Angeles County residents – wherever they may live, work and play,” District Attorney Lacey said at the news conference. “We will help law enforcement and regulatory agencies more thoroughly investigate these incidents so that criminal acts are discovered and vigorously prosecuted.”

Nearly 50 public safety agencies agreed to participate in the program by notifying the District Attorney’s Command Center when qualifying incidents occurred.

To explain the rollout notification procedures, the Environmental Crimes/OSHA Section hosted an informational session attended by more than 70 police and fire officials.

The rollout team received notifications and responded to several industrial accident scenes involving employees who were electrocuted or severely burned on the job. Rollout team members played a key role in the investigations.

Also in April 2014, the District Attorney’s Criminal Justice Institute cosponsored the two-day Environmental Justice Symposium, which brought together 110 environmental health and safety officials, prosecutors, environmental attorneys and community activists.

Twenty-two speakers focused on collaborative solutions to a variety of issues, including groundwater contamination, toxic substances and tainted marine life in Santa Monica Bay.

Recognizing the complexity of investigating and prosecuting environmental crimes, the District Attorney’s Office in 2013 reached out to public safety and health agencies throughout the county by offering three daylong training seminars.



The District Attorney's commitment to environmental protection and worker safety resulted in numerous successful prosecutions. They included:

Drug store paid \$12.3 million for unlawful waste disposal

Rite Aid Corp. was ordered to pay more than \$12.3 million to settle a civil lawsuit alleging that some 600 Rite Aid stores throughout California unlawfully handled and disposed of hazardous materials, including pesticides, paint, aerosols and solvents. The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office jointly filed the civil action with its counterparts in San Joaquin and Riverside counties.

Food company pleaded guilty in employee death

Golden State Foods was ordered to pay \$2 million in fines, penalties and restitution after pleading guilty to a felony violation of machinery lockout regulations that resulted in the robotic crushing death of a female employee in 2009. The company was required to establish a \$125,000 college trust fund for the victim's young daughter.

"My office is fully committed to the rigorous enforcement of these laws and regulations. Businesses that do not ensure worker and community safety will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."



—Jackie Lacey



Retailer paid millions of dollars in hazardous material case

Lowe's Home Centers, LLC, was ordered to pay \$18.1 million – including more than \$125,000 to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office – as part of a civil settlement stemming from claims that 118 Lowe's stores throughout California unlawfully handled and disposed of hazardous materials. The office worked with 31 other district attorneys' offices and two city attorneys' offices in filing the civil action.

Professor held responsible for fatal lab fire

University of California, Los Angeles Professor Patrick Harran was ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine and perform 800 hours of community service after he accepted responsibility for negligent laboratory practices that resulted in the burning death of a 23-year-old research associate in 2008. He also must develop and teach a seven-week organic chemistry course for college-bound inner-city youth for five years. In a separate settlement, the University of California Regents agreed to enact a comprehensive corrective safety plan and to establish a \$500,000 scholarship in the victim's name.



Expanding Alternative Sentencing Courts

District Attorney Jackie Lacey took significant steps to route more nonviolent offenders into the county's alternative sentencing courts.

At her request, the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC) expanded its criteria for participation in May 2014.

As a result, the Los Angeles County Drug Court opened its doors to all low-level felony theft offenders. In addition, participants in the county's Sentenced Offender Drug Court now included nonviolent offenders charged with low-level offenses involving the sale of narcotics.

Alternative sentencing courts were proven to increase public safety. Defendants who agreed to participate in them were placed in evidence-based treatment programs and were less likely to re-offend than those sentenced to state prison.

There also were financial implications. In her annual report video to Los Angeles County residents, District Attorney Lacey said: "I want to save taxpayer dollars by expanding the use of alternative sentencing for nonviolent offenders. This also will ensure that limited jail beds are open and available for serious and violent criminals."

Faced with the realities of implementing California's Public Safety Realignment Act, also known as Assembly Bill 109, District Attorney Lacey placed a priority in making sure the most dangerous criminals were jailed and that lower-level offenders were given meaningful alternatives to incarceration.

In an effort to make these established programs more available to defendants throughout Los Angeles County, District Attorney Lacey created the Alternative Sentencing Court (ASC) Designee Program on June 30, 2014.

Under this program, 15 prosecutors were designated as subject matter experts on ASC programs in branch and area offices. They received specialized training and resources to help them identify qualified defendants and refer them to appropriate programs.

These programs included:

- Los Angeles County Drug Court
- Sentenced Offender Drug Court
- Veterans Court
- Second Chance Women's Re-Entry Court
- Co-Occurring Disorders Court

Under the ASC Designee Program, prosecutors screened eligible defendants to determine if they were ready to abandon their destructive lifestyles and receive help. Their backgrounds were investigated and reviewed to ensure public safety.

A CCJCC report found that more than 70 percent of those who successfully completed the Drug Court program remained conviction-free in the five years following their graduation.

The other specialty courts also have been shown to reduce the recidivism rate by half compared to those sentenced to state prison.

More importantly, alternative sentencing courts have helped ordinary people turn their lives around and given them a chance to become contributing members of communities throughout Los Angeles County.



Judge Michael Tynan embraces a Drug Court graduate.



Focusing on Mental Health

Representatives of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department approached District Attorney Jackie Lacey in December 2013 to seek her help with a growing problem.

Seventeen percent of the inmates in Los Angeles County jails were mentally ill. Many were charged with low-level, nonviolent crimes but, because of their mental illness, spent significantly more time behind bars than others facing the same charges. That's because they often required mental health treatment before going to court.

As a result, the Sheriff's Department was running the largest institution for the treatment of the mentally ill in Los Angeles County. District Attorney Lacey agreed to spearhead the launch of the Criminal Justice Mental Health Project.

Five months after that first meeting, she hosted the Countywide Mental Health Summit, the first official step toward creating a comprehensive mental health diversion plan for Los Angeles County. More than 125 delegates from a variety of government agencies and community-based organizations attended. They assessed the county's mental health resources, identified the strengths and weaknesses and recommended how to close gaps in services.

The May 28, 2014, summit brought together a diverse group to discuss possible improvements in the handling of the mentally ill at every phase of the

criminal justice process — from their first interactions with law enforcement through sentencing and incarceration.

“We can intercept people at various stages of the process and divert them into more effective programs to help them get well,” District Attorney Lacey said. As a career prosecutor, she believes the criminal justice system had to change the manner in which the mentally ill were treated.

District Attorney Lacey stood with other county leaders on Sept. 17, 2014, to announce the establishment of a pilot program designed to offer mentally ill defendants services and housing as an alternative to jail for minor offenses. The program served the county's Third Supervisorial District and was funded by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky.

“There is a tremendous need for programs that provide housing and treatment to nonviolent offenders suffering from mental illness,” District Attorney Lacey said at the news conference.

After visiting model programs in Miami-Dade County and Memphis, District Attorney Lacey urged local police chiefs to train officers on how to safely respond to emergency calls for assistance involving the mentally ill. She also advocated for the establishment of community-based treatment centers for low-level offenders.



The Twin Towers Correctional Facility also serves as the nation's largest mental health facility.



Confronting Human Trafficking

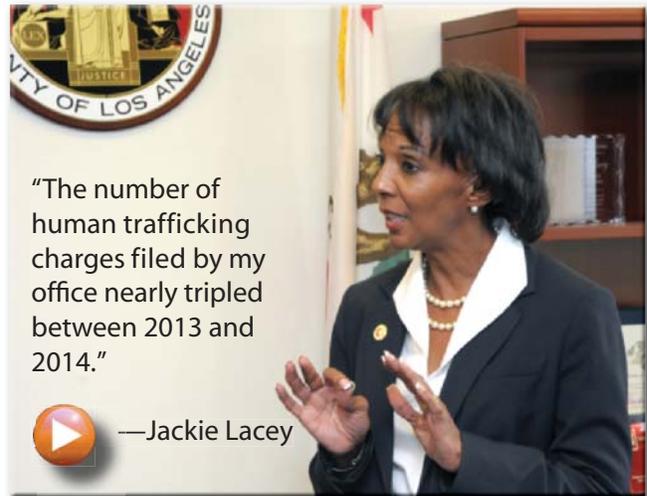
District Attorney Jackie Lacey confronted the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the United States – human trafficking.

Human trafficking has come in two forms: the sexual exploitation of children and adults, and the forced labor of individuals, mainly immigrants.

Prosecutors found that gangs increasingly were behind the proliferation of sex trafficking because they believed it was a low-risk, high-profit enterprise.

To combat this growing reality, District Attorney Lacey took several bold and multifaceted steps:

- Established a Human Trafficking Unit, bringing together specialized deputy district attorneys from the Sex Crimes, Organized Crime, Hardcore Gang and Juvenile divisions, the Victim Impact Program and the Victim-Witness Assistance Program to tackle the issue.
- Appointed a Human Trafficking Unit Coordinator to lead a committee of deputy district attorneys. Committee members worked closely with human trafficking task forces, interfaced with community-based victim advocacy groups, standardized policies and protocols, provided training to prosecutors and law enforcement personnel and developed a human trafficking case database.
- Initiated the First Step Diversion Program to get children forced into prostitution off the streets and out of harm's way. Deputy district attorneys and law enforcement identified appropriate juveniles and offered them social services. When they completed the program, they had no record of arrest.
- Implemented voter-approved Proposition 35 that included tougher sentencing for convicted sex traffickers.



“The number of human trafficking charges filed by my office nearly tripled between 2013 and 2014.”

—Jackie Lacey

- Provided training to nearly 400 law enforcement officers on best practices for investigating human trafficking crimes.
- Launched a public safety campaign whereby hundreds of letters and posters were sent to businesses alerting owners of their legal obligation to post multilingual posters with hotline numbers for victims of trafficking.

The changes reflected a new philosophy in prosecuting prostitution cases. “We believe that minors who engage in sex for pay are victims – not criminals,” District Attorney Lacey said. “We believe that we should help these children, not detain them.”

Under District Attorney Lacey, the office filed its first labor human trafficking case.



Dora Alicia Valle and her boyfriend Estrada Melvin Sandoval were charged with one felony count each of human trafficking and slavery. Valle was accused of paying to have a 9-year-old girl smuggled into the United States from El Salvador. She allegedly forced the girl to work at a Pacoima restaurant and clean the couple's Sylmar home.

The District Attorney's Office also prosecuted a number of sex trafficking cases. They included:

A trio of pimps suspected of controlling a multi-million-dollar prostitution ring, largely comprised of runaway and homeless youth, was charged with multiple counts of human trafficking of a minor for a sex act and pimping.



The three were part of a now defunct network of pimps who called themselves the "Compton Division" for the area where they forced their victims to work. The defendants controlled their victims through violence and drugs and branded the girls' bodies with "Compton Division" tattoos to establish ownership.

Daniel Gunther was sentenced to 12 years in prison after pleading no contest to human trafficking of a minor for a sex act and dissuading a witness from testifying.



Daniel Gunther



David Sheffey



Robert Walker

David Sheffey was sentenced to seven years in prison for pleading no contest to pimping a 16-year-old runaway.

Robert Walker was convicted of four counts of human trafficking of a minor for a sex act and one count each of dissuading a witness and lewd act upon a child. He faced 42 years to life in state prison.

In another case, James Junior Conley was sentenced to 36 years in prison following his conviction of the human sex trafficking and sexual assault of a 14-year-old girl.



James Junior Conley

CONVICTED



Keeping the Public Safe from Violent Criminals

The prosecution of violent crimes, such as murders, attempted murders and assaults, was a top priority for the District Attorney's Office.

The office prosecuted criminals who used guns, fists, vehicles and even dogs to kill or maim their victims.

These violent criminals were prosecuted and taken off the street. The office also sought justice for the victims of these crimes.

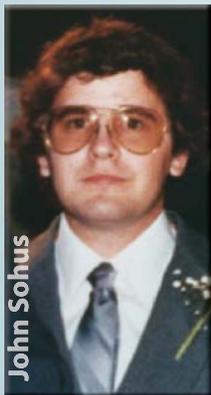
Some of these cases included:



Two men convicted in Dodger Stadium attack

The two men charged with brutally beating San Francisco Giants fan Bryan Stow following the 2011 opening day Dodgers game pleaded guilty and were sentenced to prison in February 2014. Louie Sanchez pleaded guilty to one count of mayhem and was sentenced to eight years in state prison. Marvin Norwood pleaded guilty to

one count of assault and was sentenced to four years in state prison. Stow, a Santa Cruz paramedic, was leaving Dodger Stadium following the March 31, 2011, game when he was attacked. He suffered severe brain trauma.



Rockefeller impostor gets maximum sentence

In August 2013, Rockefeller impostor Christian Gerhartsreiter was sentenced to 27 years to life in prison for the 1985 murder of his landlady's adopted son. The remains of John Sohus, a 27-year-old computer programmer, were discovered buried in

his mother's San Marino backyard a decade after he and his new wife disappeared. No trace of Linda Sohus had been found. Gerhartsreiter rented the back house from the victim's mother and vanished after the couple went missing. He spent the next two decades assuming identities, including that of a Rockefeller.

Substance abuse counselor convicted for DUI traffic fatality

Substance abuse counselor Sherri Lynn Wilkins was driving under the influence in November 2012 when she struck a pedestrian on Torrance Boulevard. Wilkins continued to drive for two miles with the man, who was still alive, embedded in her windshield. She was forced to stop after witnesses surrounded her car and detained her until Torrance police arrived. The man later died. A jury found Wilkins guilty of second-degree murder and other charges. She was sentenced in June 2014 to 55 years to life in prison.

Colorado man charged in fatal Venice Beach crash

A Colorado man was charged with murder and assault with a deadly weapon after he drove his car into pedestrians walking on Venice's Ocean Front Walk on Aug. 3, 2013. Nathan Louis Campbell was accused of killing Alice Gruppioni, an Italian bride on her honeymoon, and injuring 16 other victims when he drove onto the boardwalk. He abandoned the vehicle and later turned himself in to police. He was charged in August 2013 with one count of murder, 16 counts of assault with a deadly weapon and 17 counts of hit-and-run.

Fontana woman charged with murders in wrong-way crash

Olivia Carolee Culbreath was charged in February 2014 with six counts of murder after six people were killed in a car crash. The 21-year-old Fontana woman was accused of driving her Camaro the wrong way on the 60 Freeway in Diamond Bar before colliding head-on with a Ford Explorer. All four occupants in the Explorer and two passengers in the Camaro, including the defendant's sister, were killed.



Photo by Gary Friedman, Los Angeles Times

Dog owner convicted in mauling of woman

Lancaster grandmother Pamela Devitt was taking her nightly walk on May 9, 2013, when she was attacked and killed by four pit bulls belonging to Alex Donald Jackson. His pit bulls had attacked other victims on prior occasions. Jackson was found guilty of murder in August 2014 and sentenced to 24 years to life in prison.

Gang member sentenced to 40 years to life for campus shooting

Brandon Spencer was charged with shooting and wounding four people, including former prep football star Geno Hall, at a Halloween party on the University of Southern California campus in 2012. Spencer and Hall had an ongoing feud over social media that was fueled by their alleged gang rivalry. A jury found Spencer guilty of four counts of attempted murder. He was sentenced in April 2014 to 40 years to life in prison.

'Most Wanted' Criminal Captured

Charged with four murders, Joe Luis Saenz was placed on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted List in 2009, joining the likes of Osama bin Laden and Boston mobster Whitey Bulger.

Saenz was captured in Mexico three years later and extradited to the United States to stand trial. In March 2013, Saenz, a suspected member of the Cuatro Flats gang, pleaded not guilty to killing two rival gang members in July 1998 and the kidnapping, rape and murder of his girlfriend that same year. He also was charged with murdering a drug trafficker in 2008.

FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE

UNLAWFUL FLIGHT TO AVOID PROSECUTION - MURDER, KIDNAPPING, RAPE, PAROLE VIOLATION

JOE LUIS SAENZ

Aliases: Joe Luis Saenz, Gabriel Saenz, Gabriel Luis Saenz, Gabriel Luis Saenz, Louie Luis Saenz, Louie Joe Saenz, "Zappo," "Smiley," Peanut Joe Smiley, "Honeycutt," Joe Luis Saenz-Honeycutt, Giovanni Vanzara, "Tom," Giovanni Velasquez, Giovanni Gonzalez, Giovanni Torres, "Peanut," Peanut Saenz, Peanut Smiley, Louie Saenz, Gabriel Saenz

DESCRIPTION

Dates of Birth Used: August 4, 1975; October 1, 1975; December 31, 1975; May 1, 1976

Place of Birth: Los Angeles, California

Height: 5'11" to 6'0"

Weight: 180 pounds

Build: Medium

Occupation: Unknown

Scars and Marks: Saenz has tattoos of his name "Saenz" and "Cuatro" on his left arm, "Flats" on his right arm, and "In My Mind" on his back. He also has a tattoo on his chest, and a piece of jewelry.

Remarks: Saenz is believed to work for a Mexican drug cartel, and is known to travel between the United States and Mexico. He has reportedly made several threats, including plans to kill a police officer upon his arrest. He is believed to be armed.

CAUTION

ON JULY 25, 1998, JOE LUIS SAENZ ALLEGEDLY SHOT AND KILLED TWO RIVAL GANG MEMBERS IN LOS ANGELES. LESS THAN TWO WEEKS LATER, ON AUGUST 8, 1998, SAENZ ALLEGEDLY KIDNAPPED, RAPED, AND MURDERED HIS GIRLFRIEND. SAENZ ALLEGEDLY MURDERED A FOURTH VICTIM IN OCTOBER OF 2008 IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY.

CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS PERSON, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FBI OFFICE OR THE NEAREST U.S. EMBASSY OR CONSULATE.

REWARD

The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$100,000 for information leading directly to the arrest of Joe Luis Saenz.

October 2009 www.fbi.gov



Prosecuting Major Narcotics Cases

The Major Narcotics Division undertook the prosecution of a new and potentially lethal drug manufacturing fad that used butane gas to extract a potent form of cannabis. Extracting the resin, known as honey oil, is dangerous because butane is highly flammable and causes explosions and fires.



Broken jars containing marijuana and empty butane canisters were found inside a West Hollywood apartment damaged during the production of honey oil.

That's what happened in West Hollywood in the early evening of Jan. 25, 2013. Neighbors heard a violent explosion and called police. When they arrived, they discovered a 38-year-old man picking up debris in the hallway.

An 8- by 6-foot portion of wall was missing. Shattered glass from windows was everywhere. The bedroom door was off the hinges.

Robert Jaymes Bockoff was charged with manufacturing a controlled substance. He pleaded no contest to blowing up his father's apartment, causing \$20,000 in damage. He was sentenced to three years in state prison and ordered to pay restitution.

More than 20 of these cases involving 32 defendants were filed in 2013-2014. In all but one, explosions occurred. Several defendants were severely burned. Houses, motel rooms and apartments sustained thousands of dollars in damage.

A crackdown by the California Medical Board on doctors who overprescribe drugs for no legitimate medical reason also resulted in more prosecutions.

The Major Narcotics Division filed six cases against physicians for allegedly selling powerful narcotics

to undercover law enforcement officers without any type of physical examination or medical need. In two cases, the doctors were rearrested and charged with continuing to sell narcotics despite court orders not to do so while awaiting trial.

In another case, Dr. Hsiu-Ying "Lisa" Tseng was charged with three counts of second-degree murder and 20 counts of prescribing drugs without a legitimate purpose.



Tseng, licensed to practice medicine in 1997, opened a storefront medical office in Rowland Heights in 2005. The Drug Enforcement Administration launched an investigation in 2008 after a pharmacy reported overlapping customers. The lead investigative agency was the California Medical Board. Both agencies worked closely with the Major Narcotics Division.

Tseng was awaiting trial for murder in the 2009 drug overdose deaths of Vu Nguyen, 29, of Lake Forest; Steven Ogle, 25, of Palm Desert; and Joseph Rovero III, 21, a University of Arizona student from San Ramon. All were patients of Tseng, who allegedly prescribed the drugs.



The laundry room of the same West Hollywood apartment was damaged by the explosion.



Pursuing Justice for Family Violence Victims



Gabriel Fernandez

The May 2013 torture and fatal beating of 8-year-old Gabriel Fernandez in Palmdale focused renewed attention on the prevention of child abuse.

Pearl Sinthia Fernandez and her boyfriend, Isauro Aguirre, each were indicted on one count of capital murder following the beating death of her son.

Gabriel suffered from multiple injuries, including eight penetrating BB-gun wounds, rib fractures, a lacerated liver and a

traumatic head injury. There were several reports of abuse, and yet the child remained in his mother's home unprotected.

The haunting details of this crime, laid out in grand jury transcripts, resulted in efforts by Los Angeles County officials, including District Attorney Jackie Lacey, to introduce

sweeping reforms to safeguard children from abusive environments.

Leading the charge was the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection, established by the Board of Supervisors, which called for a major overhaul of the county's child protection system.

In response to the commission's report, District Attorney Lacey pledged to devote a prosecutor and three paralegals to expand the office's Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System (E-SCARS) unit. In 2009, the office helped implement E-SCARS, believed to be the nation's first web-based system for instant and secure sharing of these time-sensitive reports.

District Attorney Lacey also made several recommendations. They included assessing gaps in existing child protection laws and drafting legislation to close them; training local law enforcement, prosecutors and social workers to investigate these cases; and developing research-based strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect.

A committee of county agencies was formed in mid-2014 to identify ways to better share information about child abuse issues.

Other family violence cases included:

Chef who confessed to cooking dead wife sentenced

David Robert Viens, a chef who told detectives he cooked his dead wife, was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison in March 2013. Viens was convicted of second-degree murder. Dawn Marie Viens was last seen alive on Oct. 18, 2009. After his 2011 arrest, Viens told detectives he placed her body in a 55-gallon drum filled with water and left her to cook for four days in his Lomita restaurant. Her body had not been found.

Woman sentenced to prison in death of foster child

A foster mother convicted of fatally beating her 2-year-old foster daughter was sentenced to 25 years to life in state prison. Kiana Barker was convicted of second-degree murder, assault on a child causing death and child abuse in October 2013. Barker's foster daughter, Viola, suffered extensive blunt force trauma and died from massive bleeding in her chest cavity.

Mother, daughter slain in domestic violence case

For Thanksgiving 2006, Crystal Dawkins traveled to Lancaster from South Carolina to meet her birth mother, Christine Bacon. The two had not seen each other since Dawkins' birth 18 years earlier. During the reunion, Bacon got into an argument with her boyfriend Christopher Anthony Brown. He shot both women multiple times. Brown was found guilty of the murders and sentenced in April 2014 to life in prison without the possibility of parole.



Viola



Maintaining Public Trust in Government

Prosecutors and investigators assigned to the Public Integrity Division completed one of the largest public corruption cases in Los Angeles County history in 2014. The case involved the top elected and appointed officials within the tiny city of Bell.

District Attorney Jackie Lacey called the Bell case “the most significant public corruption case” prosecuted in Los Angeles County in more than a decade.



Rizzo

On April 16, 2014, Robert Rizzo, Bell’s former chief administrative officer, was sentenced to 12 years in state prison. He also was ordered to repay \$8.8 million in restitution to the city. A week earlier, Angela Spaccia, the city’s former assistant chief administrative

officer, was sentenced to 11 years, eight months in state prison. She also was ordered to repay \$8.2 million in restitution to the city.

Together, Rizzo and Spaccia represented the longest prison terms for convicted public officials since the Public Integrity Division was established in 2001.



Spaccia



Hernandez

The case concluded on Aug. 1, 2014, when the last of seven former Bell officials was sentenced in a case that left the city of 35,000 near bankruptcy. Former Mayor Oscar Hernandez, former Vice

Mayor Teresa Jacobo and former Councilmen Victor Bello, George Mirabal and George Cole were convicted of stealing nearly \$1 million.



Jacobo



Bello



Mirabal



Cole

Training Law Enforcement

Besides intense media attention, the city of Bell case also drew widespread interest from law enforcement agencies around the world seeking guidance on how to investigate and prosecute civic corruption cases.

The Public Integrity Division provided training to officials from DeKalb County in Georgia and hosted delegations from Africa and China.

The unit provided an overview of its operation, including the nuts and bolts of prosecuting a public corruption case.

Reporting Public Corruption

Los Angeles County residents who believe an elected or appointed public official or a city, state or county government worker has violated the law may send written complaints to:

Los Angeles County
 District Attorney’s Office
 Public Integrity Division
 320 West Temple Street, Room 766
 Los Angeles, CA 90012
webmail@da.lacounty.gov



The Public Integrity Division also secured convictions against two other elected officials, each for lying about his true home address.

In January 2014, a jury deliberated for less than two days before finding state Sen. Rod Wright guilty of eight felony counts – two counts of perjury, one count of filing a false declaration of candidacy and five counts of fraudulent voting in elections in 2008 and 2009 – for falsely claiming to live in Inglewood when he actually lived outside his district in Baldwin Hills.

Wright was sentenced to 90 days in county jail and ordered to complete 1,500 hours of community service. He also was barred from ever holding elective office.

As part of its mission, the Public Integrity Division pursued cases involving nonelected public employees.

They included a 37-count indictment charging 13 people with stealing thousands of new and used textbooks from four school districts in a massive scheme orchestrated by a Los Angeles book buyer. The defendants included two librarians, a campus supervisor and a former warehouse manager.

“Taking books out of the hands of public school students is intolerable – especially when school employees sell them for their own personal profit,” District Attorney Lacey said.



Six months later, former Los Angeles City Councilman Richard Alarcón and his wife were convicted of lying about living in a Panorama City house after he was elected.

A jury found Alarcón guilty of four felony counts – one count of perjury on a declaration to run for office and three counts of fraudulently voting in elections in 2008 and 2009.

His wife, Flora Montes De Oca Alarcón, was convicted of three felony counts – one count of perjury for claiming that she lived at the Nordhoff Street address on a Provisional Voting Ballot and two counts of fraudulently voting in elections in 2009.

The indictment named school employees in the Bellflower, Inglewood, Lynwood and Los Angeles unified school districts.

Of those indicted, 11 pleaded no contest to various charges, including embezzlement and accepting a bribe. Their sentences ranged from four years in state prison to 270 days in county jail. Each also was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of the bribes they received and complete 100 hours of community service.

The District Attorney’s Bureau of Investigation launched the investigation after Inglewood Unified School District police uncovered the alleged embezzlement in the district and presented the case to the District Attorney’s Office for prosecution.



Stopping Sexually Abusive Predators

As a matter of public safety, the District Attorney's Office vigorously prosecuted sexual predators and sought justice for victims of sexual assault and child sexual abuse.



Some of the sex crimes cases prosecuted included:

Former football player charged with rape

Former pro football player Darren Sharper was charged in February 2014 with drugging and raping two women he met at the same West Hollywood nightclub three months apart – on Oct. 30, 2013, and Jan. 14, 2014. In each instance, the former New Orleans Saints safety allegedly invited two women to a party and then stopped by his hotel room. He was accused of offering both women drinks, which were drugged, and then raping one of them. He was charged with two counts of rape by use of drugs, four counts of furnishing a controlled substance and one count of possession of a controlled substance.



Former teacher convicted to sexually molesting 23 children

Former Los Angeles Unified School District teacher Mark Berndt was sentenced in November 2013 to 25 years in state prison after he admitted that he sexually molested 23 children, ages 7 to 10, between 2005 and 2010. Berndt taught for more than 30 years at Miramonte Elementary School in the Florence area before being arrested on Jan. 30, 2012. A criminal investigation was launched in late 2010 after a film processor notified authorities of photos depicting children in a classroom with their eyes blindfolded and mouths covered with duct tape.

Soccer coach convicted of sexual abuse

Renoir Vincent Valenti, a long-time soccer coach in Lancaster, was sentenced in April 2014 to 130 years in prison for sexually abusing 14 boys, six of whom were soccer players he coached, and a young girl, whom he later married. Valenti was found guilty of 20 counts for abuse involving children, ages 8 to 12, that occurred between 1995 and 2012. The crimes were brought to light in July 2012 when the mother of a 10-year-old boy said Valenti molested her son. Valenti was an American Youth Soccer Organization coach in Lancaster for nearly two decades.



Two charged in Northridge kidnapping, sexual assault

Tobias Summers and Daniel Martinez were charged in the March 2013 kidnapping of a 10-year-old girl from her Northridge home. Martinez waited in a car while Summers allegedly went into the house and emerged with the victim. Martinez drove a short way before leaving the car. The victim was found nearly 12 hours later, barefoot and with visible injuries. Summers, who was charged with 36 counts of sexual assault, faced multiple life sentences if convicted. In November 2014, Martinez was sentenced to six years in prison for his role in the kidnapping.



Resentencing Third Strikers

California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 36, the Three Strikes Reform Act, in November 2012. In response, the District Attorney's Office established a specialized unit to review more than 1,200 petitions from inmates seeking to be resentenced.

The Three Strike Resentencing Unit was formed in early 2013 to provide consistent and conscientious assessments of those petitions.

Under the revised Three Strikes Law, only those convicted of serious or violent felonies faced life terms. Eligible inmates serving life sentences for lesser crimes were permitted to petition the court for possible resentencing. Judges were to determine whether petitioners "would pose an unreasonable risk of danger to public safety."

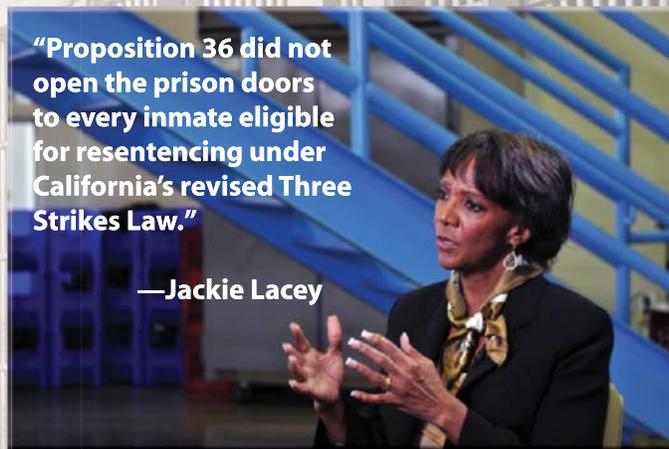
"Proposition 36 did not open the prison doors to every inmate eligible for resentencing under California's revised Three Strikes Law," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said in September 2013. "Voters intentionally placed a high burden on prosecutors to protect public safety."

"I have directed my staff to dig deep into each inmate's criminal history and incarceration record," she said. "These are difficult decisions that have a lasting effect on the quality of life in Los Angeles County."

The District Attorney's Office took a proactive stance. A special team of prosecutors began filing motions to resentence defendants who were both eligible and suitable – even before a judge had ordered them to do so.

They conducted exhaustive reviews of each petitioner's criminal history and his or her incarceration, police and court records. They also notified crime victims in accordance with Marsy's Law.

Prosecutors identified inmates whose suitability for resentencing was readily apparent. They worked with defense attorneys and visited prisons to quickly assess who should be resentenced immediately. Prosecutors also participated in developing the procedures used by the Los Angeles County Superior Court to evaluate these cases.



By the end of 2014, the unit had reviewed and completed hearings on nearly 550 petitions. More than 500 petitions were still pending. Judges summarily denied 460 petitions.

Even before Proposition 36, the District Attorney's Office had a long-standing policy against seeking a life sentence for nonviolent or nonserious crimes, which was consistent with the revisions enacted by voters.

As a result, only about 50 resentencing cases were less than 12 years old.

As part of an office reorganization, the Three Strikes Resentencing Unit became part of the Post-Conviction Litigation and Discovery Division established on April 16, 2014.

Two other units – the Discovery Compliance Unit and the Habeas Corpus Litigation Team (HABLIT) – were transferred to the new division from the Appellate Division.



Fight to Stop Release of Serial Rapist Sparked Changes in the Law

The conditional release of a convicted serial rapist to the Palmdale area spurred a legislative effort led by District Attorney Jackie Lacey to give counties where offenders might be released a greater voice in the process.

Assembly Bill 1607, signed into law by Gov. Edmund G. “Jerry” Brown Jr., granted the district attorney of the county where the sexually violent predator might reside, if released, the right to be notified early in the judicial process. It also gave that district attorney the opportunity to be heard at release hearings.

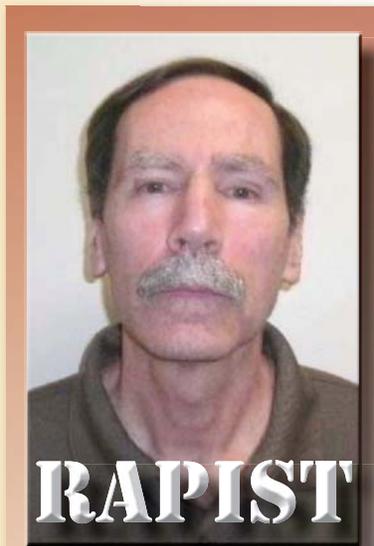
In addition, the new law allowed officials from the county where the sexually violent predator resides to have jurisdiction over the offender.

The law stemmed from the release of Christopher Evans Hubbard by a Santa Clara County Superior Court judge in May 2013. Hubbard was the first person committed under the state’s Sexually Violent Predator Law, which authorized civil commitments under certain conditions for serial rapists who fulfilled their prison sentences. He had been housed at Coalinga State Hospital since 1996.

Hubbard had more than 50 known female victims between 1971 and 1982.

In May 2013, Judge Gilbert Brown granted Hubbard’s request for conditional release from custody and determined that Hubbard should be released to Los Angeles County, where he was born and raised.

District Attorney Lacey vigorously opposed Hubbard’s release. She challenged the trial court’s decision in both the 6th District Court of Appeal in San Jose and the California Supreme Court. Both courts rejected her pleas.



Christopher Evans Hubbard was the first person committed under the state’s Sexually Violent Predator Law. Despite vigorous objections, Hubbard was conditionally released to the Palmdale area on July 9, 2014.

“This is a matter of public safety. I believe the residents of Los Angeles County deserve a voice in the process before a predator is released into our backyard,” District Attorney Lacey said in an April 3, 2014, statement asking state lawmakers to approve AB1607. “In the future, we hope to be notified at the earliest possible time and allowed to vigorously oppose the release of sexually violent predators into our community.”

The Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office volunteered and was selected as the point of contact for all written public comments regarding Hubbard’s placement in Los Angeles County. Hundreds of objections to his release were collected and presented to the judge. Despite this, Hubbard was released on July 9, 2014.

District Attorney Lacey said the new law could help prevent the release of another sexually violent predator like Hubbard. The law gave counties a meaningful opportunity to participate in proceedings dealing with a sexually violent predator’s release before the decision was made.

“We are hopeful that these changes in the law will enable us to better protect the public,” District Attorney Lacey said during a May 23, 2014, news conference on Hubbard’s release.



Bills sponsored by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office that became law in 2013 and 2014 included:



Implementing Proposition 47

The day after California voters approved Proposition 47, the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office swung into high gear to begin training prosecutors and law enforcement personnel on its impact.

Unlike most laws, voter initiatives go into effect the next day. Proposition 47 required sweeping – and immediate – changes in the way drug possession and theft-related crimes were processed.

The new law, enacted by voters on Nov. 4, 2014, reduced specified felony offenses to misdemeanors, allowed the resentencing of certain convicted felons and misdemeanants and created a new shoplifting crime.

The District Attorney's Office distributed memoranda, directives and videos. A seven-minute video distributed to law enforcement personnel throughout California was viewed more than 14,000 times in the first two weeks after the law took effect.

The office also reached agreements with the Los Angeles and Long Beach city attorneys to ensure a smooth transition. Thousands of felony cases were reduced to misdemeanors and transferred to those offices for prosecution.



Enhancing Communications



District Attorney Jackie Lacey speaks to reporters during a Feb. 12, 2014, news conference on human trafficking.

Graphics Unit significantly increased the output and improved the substance of the office's public information content.

District Attorney Jackie Lacey took considerable steps to enhance office communications with the goals of better understanding and representing the interests of Los Angeles County's diverse communities.

To build and maintain relationships with news media, employees and members of the criminal justice community, the office established the Bureau of Communications in 2013.

The Media Relations Division expanded its staff by reallocating resources and adding three former journalists to its corps of public information officers.

With the added staff, the Media Relations Division generated information about many more criminal cases and provided the public with updates via the news media and social media platforms.

The Graphics Unit also welcomed two videographers who documented news conferences, training events and other notable endeavors.

Working cohesively, the Media Relations Division, the Public Affairs Division and the

For example, when the Media Relations Division established a presence on Twitter (@LADAOoffice) to deliver real-time news releases and case updates, the Graphics Unit launched a corresponding Vimeo channel for the distribution of public service announcements and news conference videos.

Another notable area of growth was the Media Relations Division's expanded outreach to ethnic news outlets. In an attempt to meet the needs of multilingual news organizations, the Media Relations Division identified prosecutors who speak a range of languages in order to better accommodate interview requests.

With nearly 40 percent of Los Angeles County residents speaking Spanish, the District Attorney's Office also increased its efforts to make news more accessible to this audience. For the first time in the history of the office, the Media Relations Division routinely produced Spanish-language news releases and provided on-camera interviews in Spanish on a variety of topics.



The District Attorney's 2014 Holiday Giving Drive received extensive media coverage, including the front page of La Opinión.

Reopening the Hall of Justice

For months, the Hall of Justice was draped in black as construction crews worked on its restoration. The curtain came down in the summer of 2014 as the downtown fixture prepared to reopen its doors for business.

Closed after the 1994 Northridge earthquake, the Hall of Justice would soon bear witness to what had been called the “biggest move in decades.” The former center of crime and justice in Los Angeles County was being readied to house the offices of District Attorney Jackie Lacey and Sheriff’s Headquarters.

The District Attorney’s Office would occupy the second, third, ninth, 10th, 11th and 12th floors of the building. Three floors would serve as the base for many of the Special Operations prosecutors.

Hall of Justice offices also would house District Attorney investigators. The Bureau of Administrative Services would be based there, too.

The \$233 million restoration project called for the removal of two floors of the old 14-story building to maximize space and the installation of new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems. A 1,000-space parking structure was erected next to the historic building that once housed courtrooms, jail cells, offices and even the morgue.

Many noteworthy criminal prosecutions took place in the storied building, including the Charles Manson trial in 1970 and the Sirhan Sirhan trial in 1969. Additionally, the jail housed numerous celebrities, such as gangster Bugsy Siegel and stuntman Evel Knievel.



Hall of Justice Rededication Ceremony



District Attorney Lacey was joined at the Hall of Justice Rededication Ceremony by former District Attorneys Ira Reiner, left, Steve Cooley and Robert Philibosian. Center: Interim Sheriff John Scott and District Attorney Lacey cut a ceremonial ribbon.



Project LEAD Goes National, International

Project LEAD celebrated its 20th anniversary with a major commitment from District Attorney Jackie Lacey to update the curriculum, more fully develop the website and expand the program's reach far beyond Los Angeles County.

During its first two decades, the law-related education program touched the lives of more than 30,000 fifth-graders. The 20-week curriculum, taught by deputy district attorneys and investigators, instructed children about the criminal justice system and making the right decisions in life.

In an effort to share Project LEAD's success with other prosecutors, District Attorney Lacey and representatives from the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) on July 15, 2013, urged members of the National District Attorneys Association to bring this program to their jurisdictions.

During the presentation, District Attorney Lacey shared her personal story. For five years, she taught Project LEAD to students at Lorena Street Elementary School in Boyle Heights.

"We taught our kids about the social and legal consequences of crimes, such as truancy, tagging and illegal drug use," District Attorney Lacey said. "We also taught them how to combat peer pressure and resolve disputes. But, most importantly, we served as role models."

The District Attorney's Public Affairs Division worked closely with CRF to modernize and enhance the Project LEAD curriculum.

Together, they developed a website (projectlead.lacounty.gov) to distribute the new lessons.

In 2014, fifth-graders in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties were introduced to Project LEAD as were students from Alabama, Louisiana and Washington, D.C.



Special Assistant Barbara Bolante-Martinez, center, and Director of Communications Jean Guccione teach Project LEAD to students at Lorena Street Elementary School in Boyle Heights.

Prosecutors from Quebec, Canada, adopted the program and translated the curriculum into French. The Directeur des Poursuites

Criminelles et Pénales sent a delegation to Los Angeles in April 2014 to meet with District Attorney Lacey and observe several classrooms.

The international expansion continued in November 2014, when a Los Angeles County deputy district attorney made a presentation on Project LEAD to the International Association of Prosecutors in Dubai.



Deputy District Attorney Donna Lebowitz speaks about Project LEAD at the 19th Annual International Association of Prosecutors Conference in Dubai.

Addressing Chronic Truancy

Recognizing the link between truants and crime, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office took a variety of steps to reduce chronic truancy.



On March 4, 2014, the office's Abolish Chronic Truancy Program, in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Office of Education and the county Probation Department, held a training session aimed at reducing truancy in Antelope Valley elementary schools.

Each year, an estimated 1 million elementary school students are truant and 250,000 elementary school students miss 18 or more school days.

Early truancy prevention increases graduation rates and abates long-term criminal behavior. District Attorney Jackie Lacey also supported anti-truancy legislation.

Honoring Courageous Citizens



For video click on names in red

In 2013-2014, District Attorney Jackie Lacey presented Courageous Citizen Awards to 35 people who performed extraordinary acts of valor. They included:

- **Roger Ramirez** – Helped uncover one of the county's largest civic corruption scandals.
- **Alicia De La Cruz, Robert Edwards** – Saved the life of a homeless man being beaten with a tire iron.
- **Michael Miller, Joseph Evans** – Intervened during the kidnapping of a teen girl.
- **David Muñoz** – Caught a man sexually assaulting a young girl at an empty school.
- **Carrie Beltran** – Fearlessly foiled a jewelry store robbery.
- **Jeffrey Wood, Raul Real, Erick Aquino** – Subdued a drunken driver responsible for a fatal freeway crash.
- **Mitchell Maertens** – Rescued a family from a knife attack.
- **Rowdy Metzger** – Found a missing toddler after the child was lost by his drunken dad.
- **Nida Tapel** – Endured a pepper spray attack to prevent the kidnapping of an elderly victim.
- **Javiera Guarda, Suga Brown-Faal** – Stepped in when they witnessed a puppy being abused.
- **Samuel Gibson** – Stopped a brutal stabbing.
- **Henry Hernandez** – Pulled an injured woman out of a burning car after her angry ex-boyfriend ran her car off the road.
- **Muhammad Johnson** – Aided a woman being repeatedly stabbed.
- **Hoa "Tony" Luong, Michael Lee** – Helped a woman struck in the back of the head with a claw hammer.
- **Samuel Nuñez, Kem Gaskin** – Aided a 77-year-old woman who was battered and robbed by a gang member.
- **Jessica Sanchez** – Shielded a friend during a domestic violence attack.



Defending Military Service Members from Financial Predators

District Attorney Jackie Lacey and other consumer protection advocates gathered on Nov. 16, 2013, to address the issues of predatory business practices and deceptive advertising affecting military service members and their families.

An increase in consumer fraud and unlawful business practices in military communities – including outrageous interest rates on payday loans, misleading used car contracts and unlawful foreclosures – prompted the daylong workshop.

“Our military service members are strong, smart and brave,” District Attorney Lacey said. “But many of them also are vulnerable to unscrupulous individuals who covet their military bonuses and steady pay.”

“These dedicated troops also are susceptible because of their commitment to repay their debts,” she said. “Many of our service members are young, may be far from home and often need to make quick decisions about housing, cars and insurance.”

The free training event drew more than 100 participants including military judge advocates

“Today, we are showing our men and women in uniform that their service is not taken for granted. We will stand with them against financial predators. If we work together, the scammers will have no place to hide.”
—Jackie Lacey

general, law enforcement personnel and consumer protection officials.

The event, hosted by the District Attorney’s Consumer Protection Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs, was held at the California Endowment in downtown Los Angeles.

Training topics included California consumer protection laws and effective strategies for preventing, detecting and resolving consumer fraud.

District Attorney Lacey said her office was empowered to file criminal cases and bring civil actions to stop the exploitation of active and retired service members. She encouraged participants to share ideas and develop a collaborative approach to protect millions of service members who potentially could become victims.

Participating agencies included the Riverside and San Diego County district attorneys’ offices, the California Attorney General’s Office and the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office.

Advancing Public Safety through Cutting-Edge Training

The District Attorney’s Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) offered high-quality training opportunities on such cutting-edge issues as the investigation and prosecution of high-tech fraud and environmental crimes, changes in criminal law and the prevention of elder abuse and truancy. CJI also co-sponsored nine asset forfeiture seminars throughout California, as required by law.



3,615
law enforcement
& criminal justice
professionals trained

494
agencies &
organizations
participated

32
specialized
trainings programs
offered



Honor Guard Established



In March 2013, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office became the first prosecutorial agency in California to form an honor guard.

The group displayed and escorted the national flag on ceremonial occasions, serving as "the guardians of the colors."

The guard served at funeral details and other events,

including the Hall of Justice Rededication Ceremony and the 2013 California District Attorney Investigators' Association conference in Los Angeles.

Select District Attorney investigators served on the Honor Guard. The members were ambassadors to the public and strived to represent the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and dedication to duty.

Peer Support Group Created

The untimely deaths of members of the District Attorney's Office family inspired many caring employees to find ways to help.

Key to that effort was the creation of a Peer Support Group to assist colleagues and their families in times of need.

Created by members of the Bureau of Investigation in 2013, the Peer Support Group had 33 trained individuals who made themselves available to colleagues seeking assistance.

The group was designed to provide emotional support during and after times of personal

or professional crisis; preserve confidentiality and anonymity to employees seeking assistance; provide guidance or referrals to professional or alternative support resources; maintain training for group members; support individuals who have suffered family tragedies; and check on the status of individuals who have suffered illnesses and injuries on duty and provide support if needed.

The group's efforts included organizing successful fundraisers to support the families of fallen colleagues.





In Memoriam

The most valuable assets of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office are its employees. Over the past two years, the office lost staff members whose knowledge, skill and determination benefited the cause of justice and the people of Los Angeles County.



Jesus "Jess" Gomez

Jess joined the Bureau of Investigation in 1987 after serving with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the Alhambra Police Department. He held the ranks of investigator, senior investigator, supervising investigator and lieutenant. He passed away on April 24, 2013.



Daniel Joo

Daniel worked as a victim services representative for a year before he passed away on June 7, 2013. Despite his short tenure, he was seen as a rising star for his professionalism and adaptability. He served in three locations advocating for victims.



Chris Longe

Chris served as senior application developer and was the office's statistics whiz. He joined the office in 1999 and quickly handled requests – both internally and from the public – for statistics on all aspects of office operations. He died on Dec. 1, 2014.



Alex Luna

The longtime Graphics Unit supervisor died on Oct. 11, 2013. Alex was responsible for graphic design projects big and small. He was best known for creating the wall displays in the Foltz Criminal Justice Center that told the history of the office. He also designed the office website and publications.



Ann Nozawa

Ann, a management secretary, was the longest-serving employee when she died on Oct. 4, 2013. She worked for Los Angeles County for 58 years, 51 of them with the District Attorney's Office. Driven by an incredible work ethic, she served under nine district attorneys.



James "Jim" Prudhomme

Jim, a deputy district attorney, joined the office in 1977 and worked assignments throughout the county. He was transferred to the Complaints Division in 1998 and was trusted to review the most significant and complex cases for filing consideration. He died on Dec. 10, 2013.



Hyatt Seligman

A prosecutor for more than 35 years, Hyatt served in a variety of assignments. He was known for his sharp intellect and embraced taking on difficult legal issues. A gifted speaker, Hyatt trained prosecutors and law enforcement officers. He passed away on Feb. 5, 2014.



Ronald Smalstig

Ron served as a deputy district attorney for 30 years taking in a vast amount of experience all over Los Angeles County. He was a trusted trial prosecutor and prolific in his filing of cases. He was sought for his expertise on explosives, arson and firearms. He passed away on May 9, 2014.



Alicia Taylor

Alicia, an information technology manager who joined the office in 1989, served a vital role in developing the office's most significant and specialized computer systems. Her efforts improved office efficiency and helped prosecutors quickly retrieve critical case-related information. She passed away on Oct. 29, 2014.



John Zajec

A respected prosecutor and leader, John passed away on Aug. 27, 2013. He joined the office in 1985 and prosecuted some of its most challenging cases. Starting in 2001, he served in several leadership positions. John's name was added to the Los Angeles County Criminal Justice Wall of Fame in 2014.



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