

*Jackie Lacey*  
District Attorney  
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NEWS RELEASE

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**Man Posing as Immigration Attorney Charged with Grand Theft,  
Unlawful Practice of Law**

A 53-year-old man accused of practicing law without a license and bilking immigrant clients out of thousands of dollars for services that were never rendered has been charged with multiple felony counts, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Michael John Hernandez (dob 11/26/60) of Hacienda Heights pleaded not guilty today to nine counts in case BA424115. Hernandez returns for a preliminary hearing setting on June 9.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey commended the work of the Justice System Integrity Division and the Bureau of Investigation for the criminal filing.

"To betray the trust of these victims and cheat them out of hard-earned money is heartless," District Attorney Lacey said. "Any person practicing law without a license in Los Angeles County – especially those who target vulnerable immigrant populations – will be identified and vigorously prosecuted."

The defendant is charged with six counts of grand theft of personal property, two counts of unauthorized practice of law and one count of perjury by declaration.

Hernandez, who previously practiced law in Florida, maintained a law office in the unincorporated community of Hacienda Heights where he specialized in immigration matters, the prosecutor said.

The alleged offenses involve four victims and occurred between Jan. 1, 2011 and Dec. 31, 2013. A loss of approximately \$16,000 is attributed to the defendant.

Hernandez, who allegedly targeted individuals with immigration issues, purportedly engaged in a pattern of financial fraud against clients who paid for legal services which were not rendered.

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Hernandez has never been a member of the State Bar of California, according to the prosecutor. The felony complaint was filed for arrest warrant on May 2.

If convicted as charged, the defendant faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in state prison to be served in county jail.

Deputy District Attorney Oscar Plascencia of the Justice System Integrity Division is assigned to the case. The case remains under investigation by Los Angeles County District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation.

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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.