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NEWS RELEASE

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Construction Worker Charged with Capital Murder of 76-Year-Old Woman During Burglary

A construction worker has been charged with capital murder in the killing of a 76-year-old Arcadia woman during the burglary of her home where he had previously worked, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Heber Enoc Diaz (dob 9/6/91) of Pasadena is charged with one count of murder with special circumstance allegations that the crime was committed during a robbery and a burglary in case BA477170. He also is charged with two felony counts of second-degree burglary and one felony count each of first-degree residential burglary, second-degree robbery and elder abuse.

The charges include allegations of causing great bodily injury to a victim over age 70 and using deadly and dangerous weapons – a hammer, a jab saw and a box cutter, according to the complaint.

Diaz is scheduled to be arraigned today in Department 30 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center. The case was filed on April 23.

Also charged in the case are Luis Alonso Cruz Gaitan (dob 3/25/86) of Altadena, who faces one felony count each of accessory after the fact and receiving stolen property exceeding \$950 in value, and Isis Ondina Villalobos (dob 1/19/93) of Pasadena, who faces one felony count of accessory after the fact.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for those defendants on June 28 in Department 35.

Deputy District Attorney Miriam Avalos of the Elder Abuse Unit said Diaz had been employed by a contractor that was doing renovations on the home of victim Chyong Jen Tsai but was no longer working there when the April 9 crimes occurred. On that day, Diaz allegedly was burglarizing her garage when he encountered the victim and killed her, the prosecutor said.

He also is accused of committing a burglary at the property on March 19 while he was working there.

If convicted as charged, Diaz faces a possible maximum sentence of life in state prison without the possibility of parole or death. A decision on whether to seek the death penalty will be made at a later date.

Gaitan and Villalobos each face up to three years in county jail if convicted as charged.

Bail was denied for Diaz. Bail for Gaitan and Villalobos was set at \$1 million each.

The case remains under investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Homicide Bureau.

[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 protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.