

# Jackie Lacey

District Attorney

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NEWS RELEASE

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## Hawthorne Man Pleads to 2004 Murder

A 36-year-old man pleaded no contest today to murdering a woman in 2004 after DNA evidence tied him to the crimes years later, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Jaqwun Laerin Turner entered his plea to one count each of first-degree murder, kidnapping and assault with a deadly weapon. He was immediately sentenced to 34 years to life in state prison.

Deputy District Attorney Teresa de Castro with the Sex Crimes Division prosecuted the case.

Turner killed 38-year-old Leah Deshay Benjamin whose body was found on April 10, 2004, wrapped in a blanket in a South Los Angeles alley.

Her murder went unsolved for roughly a decade until Los Angeles police detectives were alerted that DNA evidence identified Turner as the killer.

Case BA437257 was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department's Robbery-Homicide Division.

### [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.