

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2012

**CITY ATTORNEY CRACKS DOWN ON GANG-RELATED  
CRIME IN HARBOR-GATEWAY AREA**

**LOS ANGELES** – City Attorney prosecutors have secured a 180-day jail sentence against a Rancho San Pedro gang member on weapons charges and have filed criminal cases against three additional defendants charged with committing gang-related in crimes in the Harbor area. Deputy City Attorney Panagiotis Panagiotou is prosecuting all of the cases.

Defendant Joseph Giacco, a reputed Rancho San Pedro street gang member, entered a plea of no contest to possession of an assault rifle and was sentenced by Judge Laura Laesecke to 180 days in county jail.

On December 30, 2011, LAPD Harbor Division Gang Officers conducted a parole compliance search on Defendant Giacco's residence. The defendant was on parole for narcotics and firearms charges. Upon a search of the residence, LAPD officers discovered an AR-15 assault rifle in the rear garage, behind a refrigerator and covered by a t-shirt, fitting the defendant. The assault rifle, in its current condition, is illegal in the State of California.

Defendant Bruno Pineda, a reputed Rancho San Pedro street gang member, has been charged with one count of receiving stolen property and ten counts of forgery. Arraignment is set for February 22, 2012, in Department 7, in the Long Beach Courthouse.

In July 2011, Defendant Pineda allegedly deposited personal checks he received from his sister into an old account at his bank. The 10 checks, ranging from \$100 to \$230 and totaling \$1,615, had been stolen from a storage area burglarized earlier that month.

Defendant Wendy Nunez, a reputed member of the Westside Wilmas street gang, has been charged with one count of criminal threats and one count of petty theft, all with gang allegations. Arraignment is scheduled for February 22, 2012, Department 7, in the Long Beach Courthouse.

In October 2011, Defendant Nunez confronted a minor while walking to Banning High School. The defendant allegedly demanded the victim's cell phone and simulated a hand gun under her sweatshirt before running off with the stolen property.

In a separate case, Defendant Andre Merced has been charged with four counts of burglary from a motor vehicle, two counts of tampering with a vehicle and one count of vandalism. Arraignment is scheduled for February 22, 2012, Department 7, in the Long Beach Courthouse.

On January 5 and 6, 2012, Defendant Merced and two juveniles allegedly broke into and vandalized a number of cars in the San Pedro and Rancho Palos Verdes areas. After a lengthy investigation, the defendant was arrested along with both juveniles.

The District Attorney's Office declined all of the cases for felony filing prior to the City Attorney's Office's filing misdemeanor charges.

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