



Riverside County District Attorney

# NEWS RELEASE

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## FUGITIVE WANTED FOR 2000 INDIO KIDNAPPING AND CARJACKING CAPTURED IN MEXICO

INDIO – A fugitive wanted for carjacking and kidnapping a woman at knifepoint in Indio more than 14 years ago has been captured in Mexico and returned to Riverside County to be prosecuted.

Mario Lua Mendoza, DOB: 1-3-73, was arrested on Feb. 6, 2014, in Ensenada, Mexico by Mexican law enforcement officers on a warrant for the 2000 crime in Riverside County.

It was determined that Mendoza is a United States citizen and he was deported to the U.S. to face justice. He was transported to the Indio jail where he was booked and held in lieu of \$250,000 bail.

In 2013, Riverside County DA's investigators assigned to the U.S. Marshal's Pacific Regional Fugitive Task Force took on the case involving Mendoza and sent a lead to authorities in Mexico regarding his possible whereabouts. On Feb. 6, 2014, Mexican police conducted a surveillance of the Ensenada home of a relative of the fugitive, ultimately leading to his arrest.

Mendoza is charged with one count of carjacking, with an enhancement of personally using a knife, and one count of kidnapping.

He is scheduled to be arraigned in case INF033751 at the Larson Justice Center in Indio on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014. The time and courtroom for the arraignment are not known at the time of this news release.

Mendoza is charged with the Jan. 15, 2000, carjacking and kidnapping of a woman who was grabbed from behind in Indio about 5:30 a.m. and forced into her vehicle at knifepoint. The victim was struck in the face with a bat. The carjacker drove the victim to an unknown location where he tied her up. He then stopped at a grape vineyard near Highway 86 and Avenue 80 in Oasis where he took money from the woman and tied her to a grape tree in the middle of the vineyard before driving away. The victim ultimately freed herself, walked to get help, and was treated at a hospital emergency room for her injuries.