

Special session looking beyond Trump

Meeting to brace for president-elect, some in the new Legislature raise economic issues.

By MACKENZIE MAYS

SACRAMENTO — California lawmakers met at the state Capitol on Monday to devise a plan to shield the state from President-elect Donald Trump's conservative policies, including his vows to repeal environmental protections and initiate mass deportations.

The goal of the special legislative session called by Gov. Gavin Newsom is to establish a \$25-million fund for legal challenges to federal policies that the governor said could “harm the state,” including when it comes to civil rights, abortion access and immigration.

But with Trump's upcoming return as president, the politics of leading the resistance are trickier as Democrats assess how they lost the White House and grapple with why support for Trump in California increased after the 2020 election despite his felony convictions, pattern of lies and role in the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol after his loss to President Biden.

Legislative leaders — under pressure to prove that the special session is more than just political theater, as alleged by some Republicans — tried to balance their concerns about a second Trump term with state issues important to constituents, such as the rising cost of living.

As the Legislature welcomed 35 new members — including a record number of women — Democrats, who maintain a supermajority, said the legal preparation was a necessary precaution.

During Trump's first term as president, California filed more than 100 lawsuits against the federal government, winning protections for undocumented people who came to the U.S. as children and securing clean air rules.

“If Washington, D.C., refuses to tackle climate change in the coming four years, mark my word that California will continue to lead as we always have,” Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg) said on the chamber's floor Monday. “Because here in the Golden State, we fight to lift up every person, no matter your background, no matter your skin color, who you are, who you love and how you identify.”

As lawmakers introduced bills that tighten up abortion rights and further affirm California as the Trump antithesis, California leaders were more tempered in their messaging and put their focus on bipartisan pocketbook issues.

“Our constituents don't feel that the state of California is working for them,” Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas (D-Hollister) said Monday, pointing to last month's election, in which voters rejected progressive-backed measures and revoked criminal justice reform laws.

Rivas reduced the number of bills allowed to be introduced, and requested that all proposals focus on “affordability and prosper- [See Legislature, A9]



FORMER Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger swears in Nathan Hochman as L.A. County district attorney. At right is Hochman's wife, Vivienne Vella. Hochman won on a promise of a “hard middle” approach to fighting crime.

ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

MAJOR SHIFTS AS D.A. TAKES OFFICE

Nathan Hochman is sworn in and quickly reverses many of his predecessor's policies.

By JAMES QUEALLY

Flanked by one of the city's most famous action heroes, Nathan Hochman began his term as Los Angeles County district attorney Tuesday by promising to restore justice and balance to a prosecutor's office he believes lost its way over the last four years.

Hochman, 61, was sworn in by former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in front of hundreds of enthusiastic supporters as the “Terminator” star dramatically announced “the city of Los Angeles is now going to be back.”

Hochman — a former federal prosecutor — kicked off his administration by immediately wiping away many of the policies ex-Dist. Atty. George Gascón put in place on his inauguration day nearly four years ago.

The Gascón policies he instantly struck down included blanket bans that stopped prosecutors from seeking the death penalty and filing charges for low-level misdemeanors such as drug possession and trespassing. Hochman also eliminated restrictions on the use of sentencing enhancements that can add years to prison terms for gang and gun crimes and decreed that prosecutors can again join victims at parole hearings, a Gascón policy that had long outraged victims' rights groups.

Much like Schwarzenegger, who has expressed concern about politics that hurt public safety and said he doesn't “like either party right now,” Hochman ran as an independent and cen- [See Hochman, A12]

For Hunter Biden, pardon presents yet another opportunity for a reset

In his next act, the recovering addict wants to help ‘those who are still sick’

By Matt Hamilton and Stacy Perman



ERIC THAYER Associated Press

HUNTER BIDEN, who was convicted of gun and tax crimes, was granted expansive immunity by his father, President Biden.

Hunter Biden was in an increasingly perilous position.

After Donald Trump defeated Kamala Harris in the presidential election, it was clear that some of his most vociferous critics were poised to assume power and carry out the promise of retribution for Trump's enemies.

Biden was also set to be sentenced to months, and potentially years, in prison after he was convicted of illegally purchasing a handgun and pleaded guilty to tax crimes.

Within his circle and the broader Biden family orbit, there were growing fears that his status as a political and legal target would only become more acute. A white paper penned by his lawyers and circulated over the long Thanksgiving weekend outlined the risks and the grave threats he faced.

But on Sunday night, the clouds lifted. In receiving the pardon that his father, President Biden, had repeatedly said he would never grant, the younger Biden was now free of all those criminal entanglements. With the stroke of a pen, the president had given his son expansive immunity for 11 years of conduct, for any and all federal offenses.

The pardon came at a deep price for his father, who was roundly criticized by Democrats and Republicans alike.

[See Pardon, A6]

South Korea president briefly declares martial law

Scandal-tainted leader backs down in his fight with legislators amid street protests.

By MAX KIM

SEOUL — South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol declared emergency martial law late Tuesday before backing down, temporarily placing the military in control of all government and judicial functions in a power grab that came after months of political stalemate. The hours of crisis and chaos have thrown the future of his presidency into doubt.

As the military and police sought to contain protesters who had poured into the streets around the National Assembly, the president announced he would lift the or-



AHN YOUNG-JOON Associated Press

PROTESTERS GATHER in front of the National Assembly in Seoul to demand that President Yoon Suk-yeol resign. His approval ratings have sunk recently.

der as soon as he could convene his Cabinet, heeding a defiant vote from the opposition-led legislature. The Cabinet met before dawn Wednesday, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency, as protesters chanted for Yoon's impeachment.

It remained unclear what immediately precipitated Yoon's decree — the first time martial law has been declared in South Korea since 1980, when a military junta ruled the country.

In a televised address to the nation announcing his declaration of martial law, Yoon called the legislature a “den of criminals” engaged in “legislative tyranny” and “anti-state activities.”

“Honorable citizens, as president, I appeal to you with a feeling of spitting blood,” he said.

[See South Korea, A4]

Arms smuggling in the Southland?

Ontario man is charged with sending military supplies to North Korea. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Dodgers welcome their newest star

Team flexes financial muscle with its signing of free-agent pitcher Blake Snell. **SPORTS, B10**

Biden targets low pay for disabled

President seeks to end rule allowing salaries less than minimum wage. **BUSINESS, A8**

Weather

Fog to sunshine. L.A. Basin: 65/47. **B6**

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GOP and Musk unveil threat to Social Security

MICHAEL HILTZIK

You may have been tempted to believe Donald Trump when he swore, along with some of his Republican colleagues, to protect Social Security. If so, the joke may be on you.



That concern emerged Monday when Rep. Mike Lee (R-Utah) uncorked a tweet thread on X labeling Social Security “a classic bait and switch” and “an outdated, mismanaged system.”

Twenty-three minutes after Lee posted the first of his tweets, it was retweeted by Elon Musk, who has been vested by Trump with a portfolio to root out inefficiencies in the government. Musk led his retweet with the comment “interesting thread”; if that wasn’t an explicit endorsement, it matched his way of amplifying others’ tweets, tending to give them credibility within the Musk-iverse.

Lee’s tweet thread, along with Musk’s apparent concurrence, serves as an outline of the arguments the GOP may use to undermine faith in Social Security, the better to soften it up for “reforms” that will translate into costs imposed on retirees, disabled workers and their dependents.

I recently reported on all the ways that Trump could quietly or secretly undermine his pledge to protect Social Security. Lee’s thread and Musk’s apparent endorsement are different — they amount to a frontal attack on the program.

While delving into Lee’s screed, we should keep in mind that he’s a leader of the cabal with the knives out for Social Security. As I’ve reported, during his first successful Senate campaign in 2010, he unapologetically declared, “It will be my objective to phase out Social Security, to pull it out by the roots.”

Lee said that was why he was running for the Senate, and added, “Medicare and Medicaid are of the same sort. They need to be pulled up.”

So here he is, right out of the box.

Lee’s attack has four basic components. One is to bemoan the fact that Social Security is funded mostly by a tax, which he asserts the government can use for any



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE Associated Press

REPUBLICAN Sen. Mike Lee of Utah is continuing his attack on Social Security, egged on by Elon Musk.

purpose — not necessarily to cover retirement and disability benefits.

Another is to point out that the program’s reserves aren’t stored in individual accounts with workers’ names on them, but collected in “a huge account called the ‘Social Security Trust Fund.’”

A third is to claim that “the government routinely raids this fund. ... They take ‘your money’” and use it for whatever the current Congress deems ‘necessary.’”

And a fourth is to complain that the trust fund is mismanaged: “If you had put the same amount into literally ANYTHING else — a mutual fund, real estate, even a savings account — you’d be better off by the time you reached retirement age, even if the government kept some of it!” He states: “Your ‘investment’ in Social Security can give you a return lower than inflation.”

None of these is a new argument — they’ve been swirling around the conservative and Republican fever swamp like a miasma for decades. They’ve been consistently refuted and debunked. Lee can’t be unaware of that. Some of his arguments have a tiny nugget of truth at their center, but in his hands are twisted and manipulated out of recognition. Consequently, we can label his claims for what they are: Lies.

Let’s examine them one by one. (I asked Lee via a message at his office to justify his tweets, but haven’t heard back.)

Yes, Social Security is funded by taxes. So what? Lee’s salary as a senator is funded by taxes too. Does that make it illegitimate? It’s true that once a tax is collected Congress can decide to spend it however it wishes. But it’s also true

that the payroll tax was enacted jointly with the provisions of the Social Security Act that designated the revenue for Social Security benefits.

As Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo observed in 1937, writing for the majority in a 7-2 opinion upholding the constitutionality of Social Security, it was clear that Congress intended the payroll tax to fund the benefits, for lawmakers “would have been unwilling to pass one without the other.”

It’s proper to note here that no one has ever proposed diverting Social Security revenues for any other purpose without recompense — except Republicans such as Lee. George W. Bush proposed converting Social Security into private accounts, which would have been tantamount to such a diversion — and a gift to Wall Street money managers eager to get their hands on the program’s trillions of dollars.

But Bush’s 2005 privatization plan was stillborn and he quickly abandoned it.

It’s also true that the program’s revenues aren’t stored in individual accounts but in the trust fund.

That’s right and proper: Social Security is a shared benefit; no one can know in advance what any worker’s benefits will be. They’re pegged to career earnings, but low-income workers get higher benefits relative to wages than higher-income workers. They’re also related to a worker’s personal and family situation — spouses, dependents, health and so on.

It also makes sense to invest the program’s revenues in a shared account, because large investments tend to perform better over time than those under the control of individuals, not least because that minimizes transaction costs.

That brings us to the notion that the government “routinely raids” the trust funds (there are two, actually — one to cover old-age benefits and the other to cover disability payments — but they’re generally treated as a single combined fund). The trust funds currently hold about \$2.8 trillion in assets, all invested in U.S. Treasury securities.

Holding a T-bond, as anyone with the slightest knowledge of government fiscal policy is aware, means the bondholder has lent the money to the government, which can use it for any purpose Congress chooses and which must pay interest on the bond. Over the years, the government has used the money to build roads and other infrastructure and provide services. Using the borrowed money for these purposes allows the government to do so without raising income taxes, which would hit the wealthy harder than middle- or low-income Americans.

Lee should ask his well-heeled patrons if they’d prefer to pay higher taxes because the government couldn’t borrow from the Social Security reserves.

Anyone have any doubts about how they’d answer? Me neither.

In any event, the financial transactions related to the buying and redemption of the program’s Treasury holdings are fully disclosed every year by the program trustees in their annual report.

What about Lee’s assertion that investing in “ANYTHING else — a mutual fund, real estate, even a savings account,” would make you “better off by the time you reached retirement age.” This statement is as solid a compendium of financial ignorance as one might wish, even coming from a U.S. senator.

To begin with, if Lee thinks the Social Security trust fund should be invested in something other than Treasuries, he can take that up with his colleagues on Capitol Hill. They’re the ones who have mandated, by law, that the trust fund can be invested only in Treasuries. Over the years, proposals to widen the portfolio have been raised and abandoned, for several reasons. Some were concerned about the potential conflicts of interest inherent in a government program investing in the stock market; others that the returns from market investments are too volatile.

Savings accounts? Is Lee kidding? The rate on savings accounts offered to the average customer of Bank of America, to choose a commercial bank at random, is 0.01% a year. As I write, a 10-year Treasury bond yields about 4.2% annually.

As for Lee’s assertion that “Social Security can give you a return lower than inflation,” the fact is that Social Security benefits are adjusted for inflation every year. They’re also lifetime benefits. Try to find an annuity plan that pays

inflation-adjusted benefits for the life of the annuity holder and his or her spouse — for all but the richest people, it would be unaffordable or at least uneconomical.

Lee also reveals a fundamental misunderstanding about Social Security as a program. It’s not just a retirement program, but a combined retirement and insurance program.

Disabled workers — and their dependents — are entitled to benefits well beyond their contributions; the families of workers who die before retirement age receive benefits that include payments for children through age 17 — through age 18 if they’re in school. If those benefits were based on the balances in a worker’s individual account, then payouts for families of those who have suffered untimely deaths could amount to a pittance, running out while still needing help.

Lee concludes by urging his followers to “acknowledge the truth: Social Security as it now exists isn’t a retirement plan; it’s a tax plan with retirement benefits as an afterthought.” This is an outright falsehood. As it now exists, Social Security isn’t just a retirement plan but a disability program. It’s funded by taxes, but to call retirement benefits “an afterthought” is so wrong it’s frightening.

What should we think about all this? Lee is a member of the Senate majority; his proposals could be a real threat to the program. The fact that they garnered an “attaboy” from Elon Musk should be their death knell. Let’s hope so.

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Biden visits Angola to strengthen Africa ties



ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS AFP/Getty Images

ANGOLAN PRESIDENT João Lourenço welcomes President Biden to the presidential palace in Luanda. Biden’s trip to Angola is the first by a U.S. president.

ferent, with shades of China’s Belt and Road infrastructure strategy in Africa and other parts of the world.

Biden will visit the coastal city of Lobito on Wednesday for a look at the corridor’s Atlantic Ocean outlet. The project also has drawn financing from the European Union, the Group of 7 leading industrialized nations, a Western-led private consortium and African banks.

It was unclear how much of the U.S. commitments had been delivered and how much will depend on the incoming Trump administration.

White House national security spokesperson John F. Kirby said the corridor’s completion is “going to take years.” That means much of it may fall to Donald Trump, who takes office Jan. 20.

Asked whether the project could proceed without support of Trump and his administration, Kirby said the Biden administration hopes “that they see the value too, that they see how it will help drive a more secure, more prosperous, more economically stable continent.”

Kirby also said the corridor was about more than simply trying to outpace Beijing.

“We’re not asking countries to choose between us and Russia and China. We’re simply looking for reliable, sustainable, verifiable investment opportunities that the people of Angola and the people of the continent can rely on,” he said.

One Angolan, 19-year-old

Ladislau Ngola, called Biden’s visit “very important for our country, as the Lobito Corridor will create lots of jobs for young people.” Another resident, Juliao Oliveira, said “Africa in general” would benefit too.

The rainy streets of the capital, Luanda, had a heavy presence of soldiers but few civilians — a striking change from Biden’s arrival Monday, when cheering onlookers lined his route. Authorities on Tuesday encouraged people to stay home to clear traffic. As the motorcade passed through outer neighborhoods, crowds waved from rooftops or intersections.

Biden and Lourenço briefly addressed reporters before a closed-door meeting. Biden ignored questions about his decision to issue a pardon for his son.

He also told Lourenço while pledging to use the trip to listen: “We don’t think, because we’re bigger and more powerful, that we’re smarter. We don’t think we have all the answers.”

Angola’s president said he’d like to see a public-private partnership to increase energy production. He praised Biden’s “vision and leadership” on the Lobito Corridor, saying it would “always be remembered.”

After the meeting, a senior U.S. administration official said China didn’t come up in the talks. The official, who insisted on anonymity to discuss a meeting that was not public, said Trump wasn’t mentioned much because Biden did not want to

be seen as speaking for him.

The official also said Biden’s visit to Lobito will be joined by the presidents of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Biden had promised to visit Africa last year after reviving the U.S.-Africa Summit in 2022. But the trip was delayed until this year — reinforcing a sentiment among Africans that their continent is still a low priority for Washington. The last U.S. president to visit sub-Saharan Africa was Barack Obama in 2015. Biden attended a U.N. climate summit in Egypt in North Africa in 2022.

Biden toured Angola’s National Slavery Museum at a site that was formerly the headquarters of the Capela da Casa Grande. The 17th century temple is where slaves were baptized against their will, with their names changed, before boarding ships to America. Angola was the departure point for an estimated 6 million enslaved people, the White House said.

Looking ahead, “I know the future runs through Angola, through Africa,” Biden said.

Speaking by the water, he said that history “cannot and should not be erased,” and that while America was founded on the ideal of freedom and equality, “it’s abundantly clear today we have not lived up to that ideal.”

Weissert writes for the Associated Press. AP writer John Karlos in Luanda contributed to this report.

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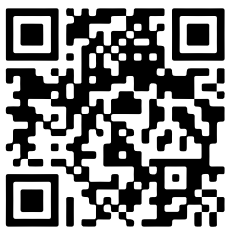
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Los Angeles Times

Vietnam tycoon could have sentence commuted

A court upholds death sentence for Lan, but it might be changed to life in prison if she repays \$11 billion.

BY ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL

HANOI — A court in Vietnam on Tuesday upheld the death sentence for real estate tycoon Truong My Lan but said it could be commuted to life in prison if she reimburses some \$11 billion, or three-fourths of the amount of her fraud in the country's biggest financial crime.

The scale of the fraud shocked the nation, with analysts raising questions about whether other banks or businesses had engaged

in similar conduct. It has also dampened Vietnam's economic outlook and made foreign investors jittery at a time when Vietnam has been trying to position itself as a home for businesses pivoting their supply chains away from China.

Lan, 67, was convicted in April of embezzlement and bribery amounting to \$12.5 billion, equivalent to 3% of the country's gross domestic product. As chairperson of the Van Thinh Phat real estate firm, the court said she illegally controlled Saigon Joint Stock Commercial Bank between 2012 and 2022 and allowed 2,500 loans that cost the bank \$27 billion in losses.

A higher court in Ho Chi Minh City on Tuesday rejected her appeal of the conviction but said that her death sentence could be



TRAN QUYNH VN Express

TRUONG MY LAN, 67, was convicted in April of embezzlement and bribery amounting to \$12.5 billion.

commuted to life if she reimburses three-fourths of the losses, state media reported.

Her lawyers argued that she had repaid the money, but the court disagreed since there were legal issues

circumstances — she had admitted guilt, showed remorse and had paid back part of the amount.

"I feel pained due to the waste of national resources," she said last week, according to state media.

But the court said her violations had negatively affected the banking sector, caused public disorder and eroded people's trust, VN Express said.

Under Vietnamese law, death sentences aren't immediately carried out and there is an extended legal process, said Nguyen Khac Giang, a visiting fellow in the Vietnam Studies Program at Singapore's ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute. He added that Lan would seek another review of the case or a presidential pardon to reduce her sentence.

Her arrest was among

the most high profile in an anticorruption drive in Vietnam that intensified after 2022. The so-called Blazing Furnace campaign touched the highest echelons of Vietnamese politics.

Lan and her family had set up Van Thinh Phat in 1992, after Vietnam shed its state-run economy in favor of a more market-oriented approach open to foreigners. The company grew into one of Vietnam's richest real estate firms, with luxury residential buildings, offices, hotels and shopping centers.

This made her a key player in the financial industry. She orchestrated the 2011 merger of the beleaguered SCB bank with two other lenders in coordination with Vietnam's central bank. The court said that she used this to tap SCB for cash and, according to government documents, owned more than 90% of the bank while approving thousands of loans to "ghost companies." These loans, according to state media, were traced to her and she bribed officials to cover her tracks.

The scale of the crime meant the case was split into two trials, and Lan was sentenced to another life sentence in October. At that trial, she was accused of raising \$1.2 billion from nearly 36,000 investors by issuing bonds illegally through four companies, state media reported.

She was also found guilty of siphoning off \$18 billion obtained through fraud and for using companies controlled by her to illegally transfer more than \$4.5 billion in and out of Vietnam between 2012 and 2022.

Vietnam has handed down more 2,000 death sentences in the last decade and executed over 400 prisoners. It is a possible sentence for 14 crimes but is typically applied in cases of murder and drug trafficking.

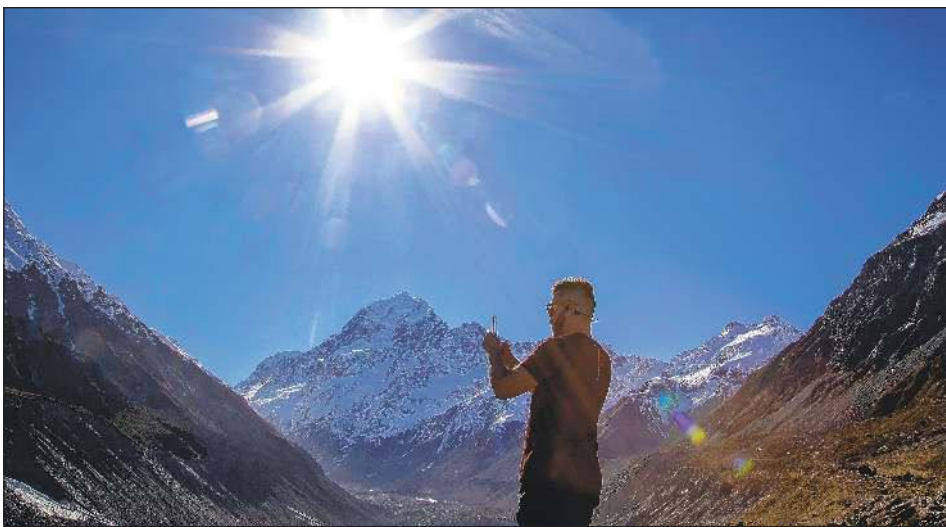
Californian is among three missing mountain climbers

Two Americans and a Canadian failed to return from a planned ascent of highest peak in New Zealand.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Three mountain climbers from the U.S. and Canada are missing after they failed to return from a planned ascent of New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki, authorities said Tuesday.

The Americans — Carlos Romero, 50, of California and Kurt Blair, 56, of Colorado — are certified alpine guides, according to the website of the American Mountain Guides Assn. A statement by New Zealand's police did not name the Ca-



MARK BAKER Associated Press

A TOURIST takes a photo near Aoraki, also known as Mt. Cook, in New Zealand's Southern Alps. The search for the climbers is delayed due to bad weather.

nadian climber, citing the need to notify his family.

The men flew to a hut partway up the mountain Saturday to begin their ascent and were reported missing Monday when they did not arrive to meet their prearranged transport after the climb. Searchers hours later found several climbing-related items believed to belong to the men, but no sign of them, police said.

Search efforts did not re-

sume Tuesday due to deteriorating weather conditions on Aoraki, also known as Mt. Cook, with heavy rain and snow forecast. Operations were unlikely to resume until conditions improved, expected to be on Thursday.

Aoraki is 12,218 feet high and is part of the Southern Alps, the scenic and icy mountain range that runs the length of New Zealand's South Island. A settlement of the same name at its base is a destination for domestic and foreign tourists.

The peak is popular among experienced climbers. Its terrain is technically difficult due to crevasses, avalanche risk, changeable weather and glacier movement.

More than 240 deaths have been recorded on the mountain and in the surrounding national park since the start of the 20th century.





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South Korean leader declares, lifts martial law

[South Korea, from A1]
Accusing his opponents of being “shameless pro-North Korean anti-state forces that are plundering the freedom and happiness of our people,” Yoon lambasted lawmakers for rejecting his government budget proposal and moving to impeach several public officials.
His presidency has been beset by scandal since soon after he took office in 2022, with relentless accusations that he and his wife had abused their positions for personal and political gain.
Yoon’s approval ratings have plummeted in recent months amid growing calls for his impeachment.

South Korean television broadcast Yoon’s address over and over again. One news anchor said in grave disbelief that “we are now reporting a situation to you that we had only seen in movies.”
Army Chief of Staff Gen. Park An-su, whom Yoon had named martial law commander, banned all political activity and proclaimed that the media were under military control.

Outside the National Assembly, around a thousand protesters tussled with police guarding the gates as military helicopters hovered overhead. Bundled in thick winter jackets, they waved banners and umbrellas, chanting, “Lift the martial law!”

Reporters, legislative staff members and lawmakers had barricaded themselves inside the building as soldiers stormed the entrance, shattering a window and setting off what appeared to be a smoke grenade or tear gas canister in an attempt to force their way in.

Early Wednesday — less than three hours after Yoon declared martial law — the legislature voted to overturn his decree. By law, the president is required to lift his order immediately. Yoon soon announced he would comply.

Upon learning of the vote, the protesters broke out in cheers, which quickly turned into another increasingly fa-



THOUSANDS of people protest the president’s martial law order in Seoul on Wednesday. They chanted, “Impeach Yoon Suk-yeol!”

miliar refrain: “Impeach Yoon Suk-yeol!”

In the minds of most South Koreans, martial law is strongly associated with the country’s pre-democratic military dictatorships, which used it as a tool to crush political dissent, oftentimes with violence.

Under a state of martial law, the military can restrict citizens’ basic rights, including detaining or searching them without a warrant. Crimes can be prosecuted in military courts.

The last leader to declare emergency martial law was Gen. Chun Doo-hwan, who rose to power in a coup in 1979. Chun declared martial law over the country in 1980, during which his military opened fire on pro-democracy protesters in the city of Gwangju, killing at least 165.

This is not the first time that democratically elected presidents have toyed with martial law.

Under former President Park Geun-hye, a conservative politician whose corruption scandal led to her impeachment in 2017, military officials had secretly prepared their own plans of declaring martial law in the event that the courts upheld her impeachment. But Park would ultimately be ousted and jailed without those plans ever being set into motion.

In September, opposition politicians raised the alarm that Yoon was preparing to declare martial law, citing the fact that Kim Yong-hyun, the defense minister, had held an customary meeting with the three military commanders who

would probably play key roles in a martial law government.

At the time, the presidential office denied the allegations, which it dismissed as political incitement akin to Stalinism or Nazism.

Yoon, a former prosecutor, rose to political prominence as a straight-shooting investigator who handled high-profile corruption cases.

But since being elected president May 2022, he has been a divisive leader, inviting controversy by engaging in misogynistic rhetoric and cracking down on critical news outlets.

Yoon has been accused of interfering in a military investigation into the death of a young marine who drowned during a search and rescue operation last

year, while his wife has been under fire for accepting a luxury handbag from a Korean American pastor in what critics have characterized as a clear case of graft.

The opposition party has also moved to impeach Yoon’s interior minister, whom it holds responsible for a crowd crush that killed more than 150 people on Halloween in 2022.

In addition, legislators from the liberal Democratic Party have tried to remove several prosecutors who investigated Lee Jae-myung, their leader and presidential hopeful.

In April, Yoon’s conservative People Power Party suffered a crushing defeat in the parliamentary general elections, which many saw as a referendum on his presidency.

On Tuesday, legislators of all stripes quickly denounced Yoon’s decree of martial law.

“There is no reason to declare martial law. We cannot let the military rule this country,” Lee said in a video he recorded in a car on his way to the National Assembly. “President Yoon Suk-yeol has betrayed the people. President Yoon’s illegal declaration of emergency martial law is null and void. From this moment on, Mr. Yoon is no longer the president of South Korea.”

Even the leader of Yoon’s party, Han Dong-hoon, condemned the president’s actions as unconstitutional.

“With the National Assembly’s vote to lift it, the state of emergency martial law has now been rendered invalid,” he said.

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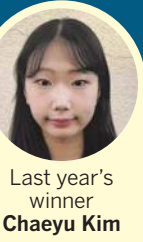
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THE NATION

Officer allegedly was Proud Boys ‘double agent’

Man on trial accused of leaking information to the far-right group’s now-imprisoned leader, Enrique Tarrio.

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN

WASHINGTON — A police officer accused of leaking confidential information to Proud Boys national leader Enrique Tarrio became a “double agent” for the far-right extremist group after its members burned a stolen Black Lives Matter banner in the nation’s capital, a federal prosecutor said Monday at the start of the officer’s trial.

Lt. Shane Lamond of Washington’s Metropolitan Police Department was a “Proud Boys sympathizer” who warned Tarrio about his impending arrest for the banner’s destruction and later lied to investigators about their communications, said the prosecutor, Joshua Rothstein.

“He knew the difference between right and wrong, and he knew it was a crime to lie to law enforcement,” Rothstein said during opening statements for Lamond’s trial.

Lamond, who was ar-

rested in May 2023, is charged with one count of obstruction of justice and three counts of making false statements. U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson will decide the case after hearing testimony without a jury.

Ana Jara, one of Lamond’s attorneys, said describing the veteran officer as a Proud Boys sympathizer is inflammatory and “simply not true.” Jara said prosecutors are asking the judge to view “cherry-picked” messages between Lamond and Tarrio “in a vacuum” without the proper context.

“Context matters, especially in conversations,” Jara said.

Tarrio, who could be a key witness at Lamond’s trial, is serving a 22-year prison sentence after a jury convicted him and other Proud Boys leaders of seditious conspiracy charges stemming from the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

The judge said Tarrio was waiting for the outcome of last month’s presidential election before deciding whether to testify at Lamond’s trial. President-elect Donald Trump, who repeatedly has vowed to pardon people convicted of Capitol riot charges, suggested he would consider pardoning



PATRICK SEMANSKY Associated Press

L.T. SHANE LEMON of Washington’s Metropolitan police force faces obstruction and other charges.

Tarrio.

Tarrio was arrested in Washington two days before Proud Boys members joined a pro-Trump mob attack on the Capitol. The Miami resident wasn’t at the Capitol when the mob stormed the building and interrupted the congressional certification of President Biden’s 2020 electoral victory.

Tarrio was sentenced to more than five months in jail for burning the banner stolen from a historic Black

church in downtown Washington and for bringing two high-capacity firearm magazines into the District of Columbia.

Lamond, who met Tarrio in 2019, had supervised the intelligence branch of the Police Department’s Homeland Security Bureau. He was responsible for monitoring groups such as the Proud Boys when they came to Washington.

Lamond’s name repeatedly came up during Tarrio’s

2023 trial. The men exchanged hundreds of messages across several platforms, with Lamond frequently greeting Tarrio with the words “hey brother.”

Rothstein said Lamond provided Tarrio with “real-time updates” on the police investigation of the Dec. 12, 2020, banner burning. Tarrio, in turn, shared the updates with other Proud Boys members.

“This play-by-play information allowed the Proud Boys to be one step ahead of law enforcement,” the prosecutor said.

In a message to Tarrio on Dec. 25, 2020, Lamond said police investigators had asked him to identify Tarrio from a photograph. Lamond warned Tarrio that police may be seeking a warrant for his arrest.

Later, on the day of his arrest, Tarrio posted a message to other Proud Boys leaders that said, “The warrant was just signed.”

Lamond’s indictment accuses him of lying to and misleading federal investigators when they questioned him in June 2021 about his contacts with Tarrio.

“The defendant knew the truth, and he chose to lie anyway,” Rothstein said.

The indictment also says Tarrio and Lamond ex-

changed messages about the Jan. 6 riot and discussed whether Proud Boys members were in danger of being charged in the attack.

“Of course I can’t say it officially, but personally I support you all and don’t want to see your group’s name and reputation dragged through the mud,” Lamond wrote.

Lamond, of Stafford, Va., was placed on administrative leave in February 2022.

The first government witness to testify at Lamond’s trial was Metropolitan Police Lt. Ahsan Mufti, who investigated the banner burning and obtained a warrant for Tarrio’s arrest.

Mufti said Lamond didn’t tell him that Tarrio had personally confessed to him that he had burned the banner. Mufti said that would have helped his investigation. However, Tarrio publicly confessed to the crime on social media before his arrest.

On cross-examination, Mufti said Lamond helped him identify Tarrio’s image in a photograph and his voice on a podcast.

“He was in fact quite helpful?” defense attorney Mark Schamel asked.

“He was,” Mufti replied.

Kunzelman writes for the Associated Press.

Will GOP target no-fault divorce after state repeals failed?

Advocates urge those contemplating ending their marriage to ‘pull the trigger’ before Trump’s return.

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI

NASHVILLE — Married couples across the U.S. have had access to no-fault divorce for more than 50 years, an option many call crucial to supporting domestic abuse victims and key to preventing already crowded family courts from drowning in complicated divorce proceedings.

But some advocates for women became worried during the campaign as old comments from vice presidential candidate JD Vance opposing no-fault divorce circulated.

And after Donald Trump and Vance won the election, warnings began popping up on social media urging women who might be considering divorce to “pull the trigger”

while they still could. Some attorneys posted saying they were seeing a significant increase in calls from women seeking divorce consultations.

The president-elect — who is twice-divorced — hasn’t championed overhauling the country’s divorce laws, but in 2021 Vance lamented that divorce is too easily accessible, as have conservative podcasters and others.

“We’ve run this experiment in real time, and what we have is a lot of very, very real family dysfunction that’s making our kids unhappy,” Vance said during a speech at a Christian high school in Santa Monica, where he criticized people being able to “shift spouses like they change their underwear.”

Despite concerns, even those who want to make divorces harder to get say they don’t expect big, swift changes. There is not a national coordinated effort underway.

And states determine their own divorce laws, lim-

iting what federal officials can do.

“Even in some of the so-called red states, it hasn’t gotten anywhere,” said Beverly Willett, co-chair of the Coalition for Divorce Reform, whose group has unsuccessfully attempted to convince states to repeal their no-fault divorce laws.

Mark A. Smith, a political science professor at the University of Washington, said that though many Americans have become accustomed to no-fault divorce being an option, Vance’s previous comments on making it more difficult to end a marriage could help jumpstart that effort.

“Even though he’s not directly proposing a policy, it’s a topic that hasn’t gotten a ton of discussion in the last 15 years,” Smith said. “And so to have a national-profile politician talk that way is noteworthy.”

Meanwhile, Republican Party platforms in Texas and Nebraska were amended in 2022 to call for the removal of no-fault divorce. Louisiana’s Republi-

can Party considered something similar earlier this year but ultimately declined to do so.

A handful of proposals have been introduced in conservative-led state legislatures over the years, but all immediately stalled after they were filed.

In January, Oklahoma Republican state Sen. Dusty Deever introduced legislation that would have barred married couples from filing for divorce on the grounds of incompatibility. Deever backed the bill after writing that no-fault divorce was an “abolition of marital obligation.”

In South Carolina, two Republican lawmakers filed a bill in 2023 that would have required both spouses, rather than just one, to file for a no-fault divorce. And in South Dakota, a Republican lawmaker has been attempting to remove irreconcilable difference as grounds for divorce since 2020.

None of the sponsors of these bills responded to interview requests from the Associated Press. All are

members of the conservative Freedom Caucus in their states.

Some Democratic lawmakers say they remain worried about the future of no-fault divorce. They point to the U.S. Supreme Court overturning the constitutional right to abortion in 2022 as an example of a long-time right that was revoked through a decades-long effort.

“When you choose to be silent, you allow for this to creep in,” said Democratic South Dakota state Rep. Linda Duba. “These are the bills that gain a foothold because you choose to be silent.”

Before California became the first state to adopt a no-fault divorce option in 1969, married couples had to prove that their spouse had violated one of the approved “faults” outlined in their state’s divorce law or risk a judge denying their divorce, said Joanna Grossman, a law professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Qualifying reasons varied by state, but most states

included infidelity, incarceration or abandonment.

The system was a particular burden on domestic violence victims, often women, who could be stuck in dangerous marriages while they tried to prove their partner’s abuse in court through expensive and lengthy legal proceedings.

“If there was any evidence that the couple both wanted to get divorced, that was supposed to be denied because divorce was not something you got because you wanted it; it was something you got because you’ve been wronged in a way that the state thought was significant,” Grossman said.

Every state in the U.S. has adopted a no-fault divorce option. However, 33 states still have a list of approved grounds for divorce — including adultery and felony conviction. In 17 states, married people can end their marriages only through no-fault divorce.

In the 1990s, concern pushed by President George H.W. Bush’s administration over the country’s divorce rate sparked a brief movement for states to adopt “covenant marriages” — intended not to replace no-fault divorce laws, but to provide another option for couples, with counseling requirements and strict exceptions for divorce.

Louisiana was the first state to embrace covenant marriage options, but the effort largely stopped after Arizona and Arkansas followed suit.

Christian F. Nunes, president of the National Organization for Women, said she is “extremely worried” about the possibility of no-fault divorce being removed with the incoming Trump administration, Republican-controlled Congress and wide range of conservative state leaders.

“With so many states focusing on a misogynistic legislative agenda, this will turn back the clocks on women’s rights even more,” Nunes said in a statement. “This is why removing ‘no fault’ divorce is another way for the government to control women, their bodies, and their lives. Eliminating no-fault divorce is also a backdoor way of eliminating gay marriage, since this implies that a marriage is only between a man and a woman.”

Willett, whose Coalition for Divorce Reform opposes no-fault divorce, said she’s cautiously optimistic that the political tide could change when Trump is back in office.

“Was what he said an indication of things to come? I don’t know,” she said. “It’s a good thing, but it’s certainly not anything that has been really discussed other than a few high-profile conservatives who talk about it.”

Kruesi writes for the Associated Press.



OLEG PETRASIUK Ukrainian 24th Mechanized Brigade

UKRAINIAN soldiers train in eastern Ukraine’s Donetsk region on Friday. The new U.S. aid includes counter-drone systems, long-range missiles and land mines.

U.S. will send \$725 million more in military assistance to Ukraine

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. is preparing to send Ukraine an additional \$725 million in military assistance, including counter-drone systems and munitions for its High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, which could indicate more of the longer-range missiles are headed to the battlefield.

It was unclear whether the munitions for the HIMARS are the coveted ATACMS — the Army Tactical Missile System — but

Ukraine has been pressing for more of the longer-range missiles to strike additional targets inside Russia.

The package, announced Monday by the State Department, also includes more of the anti-personnel land mines that Ukraine is counting on to slow Russian and North Korean ground forces in Russia’s Kursk region.

President Biden has pledged to spend all of the military assistance funds Congress approved this year for Ukraine before the end of his administration Jan. 20,

which before Monday’s announcement included about \$7.1 billion in weapons that would be drawn from Pentagon stockpiles.

There is widespread speculation and uncertainty about what the new Trump administration will mean for Ukraine as the incoming president has promised to end the conflict.

In a major shift, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signaled Friday that an offer of NATO membership to territory under Kyiv’s control could end “the hot stage of the war.”

Secret Service shot at suspects near home of Treasury secretary

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — An investigation is underway after a Secret Service agent working on protective assignment outside Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen’s house fired a weapon after a confrontation between the agent and occupants of a sedan early Tuesday.

At about 1:30 a.m. Tuesday, the agent assigned to Yellen’s protective detail outside her home saw a sedan with multiple people attempting to open car doors along the street, according to Secret Service

spokesman Anthony Guglielmi.

A confrontation between the agent and the car’s occupants led to gunfire.

It was unclear how many shots were fired by the agent.

The Secret Service said there is no evidence that anyone was harmed.

The sedan fled the scene, and a lookout was issued to local law enforcement, Guglielmi said.

The D.C. Metropolitan Police Department is investigating the shooting, and the case will also be reviewed by the U.S. Attorney’s Office.



JACQUELYN MARTIN Associated Press

NO ONE was hurt in the incident outside Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen’s home, authorities said.

Hunter Biden looks to the future after pardon

[Pardon, from A1]

For Hunter Biden, the pardon is an extraordinary chance at a reset after climbing out of the wreckage of crack cocaine and alcohol addiction.

“He was pleased. He’s grateful,” said Mark Geragos, one of Biden’s defense attorneys. He declined to elaborate.

Bobby Sager, a friend of Biden and his second wife, Melissa, saw the couple last week and spoke to Biden in recent days. The pardon offered relief, Sager told The Times.

“It’s been a long, difficult road,” said Sager, who attended Biden’s criminal trial in Wilmington, Del., and dined with the family at night after court.

“They’ve been under constant, aggressive scrutiny for something like six years,” he said. “Today is the first day they can wake up and not have that as part of their first thoughts.”

Looking for ‘ways to be helpful’

Hunter Biden’s next act is unclear.

The 54-year-old promised to “devote the life I have rebuilt to helping those who are still sick and suffering,” according to a statement he issued Sunday. He did not respond to several messages seeking comment.

The fortune that was at the heart of his federal tax case and fueled his years-long drug binge derived from foreign business deals, legal work and consulting. He was also a board member of the Ukrainian gas firm Burisma, a post that paid \$500,000 to \$1 million per year.

More recently, his income has come from the sale of his paintings, his 2021 memoir, “Beautiful Things,” and millions of dollars in loans from his friend, attorney and confidant, L.A.-based lawyer Kevin Morris.

For the last several years, Biden has lived in a string of rentals across L.A. and Malibu while he has publicly committed to remaining sober from crack cocaine and alcohol. Paparazzi have snapped photos of him hiking with his wife, shopping at the Grove and two weeks ago taking his young son Beau to Disneyland.

Sager said Biden could continue writing, venture into podcasting or some other public speaking effort, press on with his artistic ambitions or pursue another path.



PRESIDENT BIDEN claps while watching a Christmas tree-lighting ceremony with family members, including son Hunter, center, in Nantucket, Mass. The president was roundly criticized for pardoning his son.

“He wants to find ways to be helpful to other people that are healing — healing in their addiction or from life in general,” Sager said, adding that “the country” also needed “healing.” “He is in a lot of ways uniquely qualified to be a constructive voice in that conversation.”

Biden has been trailed for years by a documentary crew in a project backed by Morris.

The filmmakers have shot intimate moments in Biden’s life: painting at home in Malibu, confronting criticism over his efforts to sell his art, and defying a congressional subpoena in Washington. In June, the filmmakers sat through much of Biden’s criminal trial in Delaware and shot outside court as jurors deliberated and ultimately convicted him of illegally purchasing a handgun. The current status of the documentary project is unclear.

Biden wrote in his book that in recent years he was also focused on “trying to make good on my debts — both figurative and literal,” as well as on his sobriety. He’s relied on Morris and others in the recovery community for guidance.

“We’re making sure our connections are active in our

daily lives so that they’re fully available in a moment of crisis,” Biden wrote in his memoir.

The legal trials and public scrutiny have hit the family hard. Geragos, his defense attorney, noted that the specter of the tax trial coming on the heels of the Delaware case with a “parade of witnesses that would be nothing more than character assassins” was especially difficult. It also was among the reasons Biden pleaded guilty, he said.

“I don’t think Hunter wanted to put his family through that again,” said Geragos. “People don’t understand how intrusive and abusive and challenging that is to someone who is five years sober.”

‘The threat against Hunter is real’

Biden’s father had long said that he would not pardon his son and that he would respect the judicial and legal process in the criminal cases, including the jury’s verdict. The president’s press secretary reiterated that promise just last month.

But he and his aides said he reconsidered over Thanksgiving in Nantucket, Mass., where he spent the holiday with Hunter and his grandchildren.

Pressure came from the court calendar: Mere days remained before judges were to sentence Biden, and his lawyers had compiled letters from loved ones to submit to the court, begging for mercy and attesting to his character.

Into the mix, his lawyers added another tactic.

On Saturday, the legal

team publicly circulated a 52-page white paper arguing that Trump and his allies had turned Biden into a “political tool” and that his prosecutions were sought to influence the 2020, 2022 and 2024 elections. The document chronicled a sequence of events dating from 2017 in which Trump or his allies used Biden “to attack and injure his father.” It singled out how the attempt to impeach President Biden by focusing on his son had relied on Russian disinformation.

“With the election now decided, the threat against Hunter is real,” said the white paper, released by Winston & Strawn, the law firm of Biden’s defense attorney, Abbe Lowell. “It is clear Trump and fellow Republicans seem intent to see Hunter and members of his family prosecuted further.”

Within hours of the document’s public release, the president informed aides that he planned to pardon his son. His public statement Sunday echoed the theme of political victimization — and aggravement — laid out by his son’s attorneys.

“As I have wrestled with this, I also believe raw politics has infected this process and it led to a miscarriage of justice,” he said in the statement. “In trying to break Hunter, they’ve tried to break me — and there’s no reason to believe it will stop here.

“Enough is enough.”

President’s pardon widely criticized

The move drew scorn from both sides of the political spectrum. Republicans painted President Biden as

a liar for recanting his public vows to refrain from pardoning his son.

Among Democrats, the pardon was criticized as a political gift to the incoming administration.

Jon Lovett, a former President Obama speechwriter turned podcast host, questioned how President Biden’s rationale made no mention of Trump but instead highlighted his son’s sobriety.

“There’s a lot of people on whom the gears of justice have turned while they were trying desperately to maintain their sobriety — and no pardons for them,” Lovett said on “Pod Save America.” Co-host Jon Favreau cast the pardon as an time when the elder Biden’s “ego, again and again, has gotten in the way.”

NYU Law professor Rachel Barkow, who focuses on criminal and constitutional law and served as a member of the United States Sentencing Commission, identified a different problem: thousands of petitions for pardon that have gone unsigned.

“Biden has not done anything on those,” Barkow told The Times. “It’s a tale of two cities. You can’t do this for your son and ignore everyone else — other people’s children matter too.”

Barkow said that not maximizing his pardon power in office and extending that power to his son was a stain on his legacy.

“If he made regular use of this to give regular people remedy from injustice, it wouldn’t stand out as it does.

“But because he has such a low clemency rate, it sticks out like a sore thumb.”

‘I don’t fear the future anymore’

Taking stock of the pardon and its impact, Fox News host Sean Hannity asked two top Republican lawmakers Monday if the clemency spelled the end of criminal exposure for Hunter Biden and his family.

“Is this over? Is this over for Joe Biden?” Hannity asked.

“I think the new Trump Justice Department is going to have a lot on its platter,” replied Rep. James Comer (R-Ky.), the chair of the House Oversight Committee, also indicating that other Biden relatives, including President Biden’s brother James, would remain in the crosshairs of his committee and the incoming administration.

Both Comer and Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) predicted that James Biden would receive a pardon before the end of the president’s term.

For Hunter Biden, the path is clear. He’ll remain out of prison in the twilight of his father’s life and for the arrival of his first grandchild next year; daughter Naomi announced her pregnancy last month.

“I don’t fear the future anymore. ... This story already has a happy ending,” Biden wrote near the end of his memoir, which detailed how his crack addiction took him from the suites of the Chateau Marmont to the corners of Skid Row, searching for his next fix.

Sager said he’s gratified Biden will remain present in his children’s lives and hoped that even critics would view Biden’s admitted debauchery as a blip in an upstanding life.

“This is a smart Yale Law School graduate who is a very caring and capable person,” Sager said. “He’s an artist, he wants to do his art, and he wants to be somebody that’s really contributing to the welfare of society.”

His art dealer, Georges Berges, suggested on Instagram on Monday that the pardon offered a bookend to the saga. He noted that his gallery had endured “political assaults and other attacks” along with a congressional subpoena.

“This had always been genuinely about the art and I always believe that only someone with his history could have created the art he did and I knew from experience that with focus and friendship his work could become consequential,” Berges said. “Something I said then, as I do now.”

Alluding to Biden’s journey from lawyer to lobbyist to crack addict to right-wing whipping boy, Berges concluded that “Hunter Biden’s story was the American story.”

“The story that said that your past doesn’t have to define your future,” he said, “that tomorrow is a new day.”

Jury deliberations begin in N.Y. subway chokehold death case

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Jurors began deliberating Tuesday in the trial of a military veteran charged with using a fatal chokehold to subdue a man whose behavior was alarming passengers on a New York subway train.

The jury is weighing manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide charges in the death of Jordan Neely, a troubled street performer who was homeless.

The veteran, Daniel Penny, has pleaded not guilty.

Penny, 26, has said he was protecting fellow subway riders and intended only to restrain Neely and hold him for police, not to hurt him. Prosecutors say the Marine veteran used far too much force for too long when he gripped Neely by the neck for about six minutes.

The deliberations follow a month of testimony in the closely watched case.

It has animated debate about public safety, societal responses to mental illness and homelessness, the line between self-defense and aggression, and the role of race in all of it.

The 30-year-old Neely, who was Black, sometimes entertained passersby with Michael Jackson impersonations but also struggled with depression, schizophrenia and drug use after his mother was strangled during his teen years. Penny, who is white, was a college architecture student who served four years in the Marines.

Witnesses said Neely boarded a train in Manhat-



DANIEL PENNY has pleaded not guilty in the death of a subway rider.

tan on May 1, 2023, and started acting erratically, yelling about his hunger and thirst and proclaiming that he was ready to die, to go to jail or — as Penny and some other passengers recalled — to kill.

Penny came up behind Neely, grabbed his neck and head and took him to the floor. The veteran later told police he’d held Neely in “a choke” and “put him out” to ensure he wouldn’t hurt anyone.

City medical examiners ruled that Neely was killed by having his neck compressed in a chokehold. A pathologist hired by Penny’s defense contradicted that finding, attributing the death to a variety of other factors.

Penny’s lawyers argued that he used what they term a “civilian restraint,” departing from the chokehold technique he’d been taught in the military in order to control Neely without rendering him unconscious.

Prosecutors say Penny had the training to know that what he was doing could kill.

First lady departs for last foreign trip

She will visit Italy, UAE, Qatar and Notre Dame reopening ceremony in Paris.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Jill Biden was departing Tuesday on her final solo foreign trip as first lady, a six-day, four-country jaunt through Italy, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar that wraps with her and President-elect Donald Trump joining other dignitaries in Paris to celebrate the reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral.

Biden will focus throughout the trip on the issues she has championed as first lady, including support for military families, education and research into cancer and women’s health, and will also highlight U.S. partnerships in these areas with the countries hosting her, according to her office.

She is the first Italian American to become first lady and has planned a side trip to Gesso, the tiny Sicilian village from which her father’s family hailed.

Paris is the final stop to help celebrate the reopening of Notre Dame. The cathedral was painstakingly reconstructed after fire nearly destroyed it five years ago.

Trump, who was presi-



JILL BIDEN departed Tuesday on a six-day trip, which is her 10th solo excursion abroad as first lady.

dent at the time of the fire, announced Monday that he also will travel to the French capital to join others attending the high-security event.

Jill Biden has become somewhat of a world traveler as first lady; Tuesday’s trip will be her 10th solo excursion abroad. She also has accompanied President Biden on several of his foreign trips.

On her own, she has led the U.S. delegations to the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and this year’s Olympic Games in Paris, traveled to Ukraine shortly after the invasion by Russia, and has visited Latin America and Africa. In October, she attended the inauguration of Mexico’s first female president, Claudia Sheinbaum.

Biden was scheduled to depart Tuesday evening after teaching her English and writing classes at Northern Virginia Community College.

She arrives Wednesday at Naval Air Station Sigonella in Catania, Italy, to meet with personnel and deliver remarks as part of Joining Forces, her White House initiative to support military families. Her father, Donald Jacobs, was a Navy signalman during World War II.

The first lady then stops in Gesso, Italy, before continuing on to Abu Dhabi for a

full day of events Thursday. The schedule includes a tour of Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi as part of the Biden Cancer Moonshot program and participation in a conversation about the White House Initiative on Women’s Health Research at the Milken Institute Middle East and Africa Summit.

Biden will also visit with Sheikhha Fatima bint Mubarak, chairwoman of the General Women’s Union and the Family Development Foundation, and president of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, in Abu Dhabi.

On Friday in Doha, Qatar, the first lady will highlight the two countries’ interests in education and health with separate visits to the Qatar Foundation and Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, respectively.

She’ll also be a guest at a dinner banquet hosted by Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser to celebrate the royal family wedding of Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and Sheikhha Fatima bin Nasser bin Hassan Al Thani at Al Wajba Palace in Doha, the Qatari capital.

Biden is the keynote speaker Saturday at the Doha Forum, where policy leaders discuss global challenges, before she travels to Paris for the Notre Dame reopening. She is due to return to Washington on Sunday.



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BUSINESS

Talent firm Gersh grows with You First purchase

Beverly Hills agency pushes into sports with acquisition of the Madrid-based representation firm.

By Wendy Lee

Beverly Hills-based talent agency Gersh is acquiring Madrid-based sports representation firm You First in a major expansion that marks the firm's entry into the highly competitive business of working with athletes.

The deal, announced Tuesday, doubles the agency's staff to more than 600 people.

Additionally, the pact expands Gersh's footprint to 22 offices in 14 countries. You



Courtesy of Gersh

STEVE GERSH, left, will lead Gersh Sports. You First CEO Juan Aisa will continue to run You First.

First has more than 1,000 clients, including Spanish soccer player Fabián Ruiz and NBA player Jarrett Allen.

Prior to the acquisition, Gersh did not represent athletes but rather focused on actors, directors, writers

and other talent.

"It felt essential for the agency to grow, change and evolve, and growth into the sports representation vertical was a central pillar and focus of where we felt we wanted to take the agency," managing partner Steve Gersh said in an interview. "The area that we were where we felt there were the strongest tailwinds and biggest opportunity for growth, not only domestically but globally, was in sports and sports representation."

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

You First Chief Executive Juan Aisa said the Gersh partnership allows his business to offer "greater support for clients." Aisa will join Gersh's board and continue to run You First, while Steve Gersh will lead Gersh Sports, the agency said.

"Together, we're building an ecosystem that goes beyond sports and entertainment representation to foster innovation and create new opportunities for global expansion," Aisa said in a statement.

The deal comes after many agencies and management firms were affected by last year's dual Hollywood strikes. Those same companies are adapting to an entertainment industry in which athletes, actors and other celebrities are embarking on various business endeavors, which span social media videos, sports, music, TV and film.

Agencies, including WME owner Endeavor and Creative Artists Agency, evolved by growing and diversifying.

Gersh said his agency is profitable and is looking at

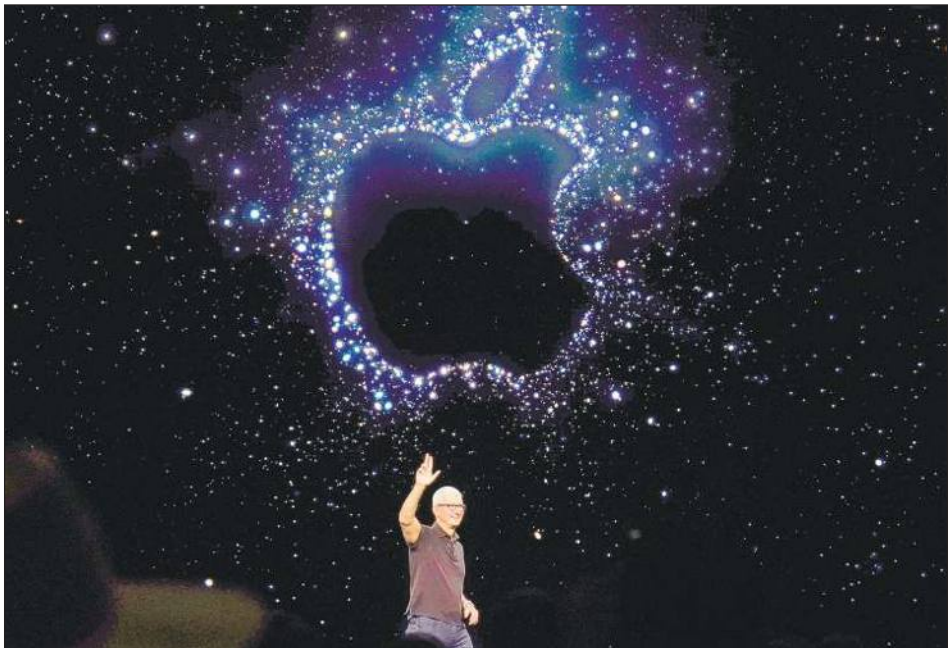
other potential acquisition opportunities.

"This is the start of the journey, not the end," Gersh said.

Last year, the Gersh agency took on an investment from private equity firm Crestview Partners in an effort to grow the representation business. Crestview has a 45% ownership stake in Gersh, which was founded in 1949.

The You First acquisition is the second purchase in Gersh's recent expansion. In January, the agency bought A3 Artists Agency's digital and alternative content departments.

In addition to representing athletes, influencers and other talent, You First works with sports leagues and major brands such as Formula 1 and Starbucks on marketing campaigns.



APPLE CEO Tim Cook in 2022. The tech giant disputes the claims in the lawsuit.

Apple employee's lawsuit alleges violations of privacy, free speech

Firm is accused of monitoring workers' iCloud accounts and blocking them from discussing their wages.

By Suhauna Hussain

An Apple employee has sued the company, alleging it improperly requires access to personal data that employees store on the tech behemoth's iCloud.

The lawsuit, filed by Amar Bhakta, who has

worked in advertising technology for Apple since 2020, also alleges the company's policies illegally restrict discussions about wages and working conditions among workers.

Apple provides employees with iPhones and other equipment, but it is common for employees to use their own devices or to link company-issued products to their personal iCloud accounts, according to the lawsuit.

When they do so, the lawsuit alleges, Apple demands as part of its terms of employment that employees al-

low the company to install software that makes it possible to search a device or iCloud account. In addition, the company "actively discourages" the use of work-only iCloud accounts, the lawsuit said.

According to the lawsuit, Apple forbade Bhakta from speaking publicly about his work in digital advertising and required him to remove information about his work from his LinkedIn profile.

These moves "limited his visibility and attractiveness in the job market," the lawsuit said.

"If you use your personal account on an Apple-managed or Apple-owned iPhone, iPad or computer, any data stored on the device (including emails, photos, video, notes and more), are subject to search by Apple," company policy states, according to the lawsuit.

Taken together, Apple's policies have a chilling effect on employees' willingness to be whistleblowers on internal issues and on their freedom of movement in the job market, the lawsuit said.

Bhakta filed the suit in Santa Clara County Superior Court this week under the Private Attorneys General Act, a unique California law that allows employees to sue on behalf of the state for labor violations.

"All California employees have the right to speak about their wages and working conditions," said Jahan Sagafi, an attorney at Outten & Golden, the firm that represents Bhakta, in a Monday news release. "Apple's broad speech suppression policies create a danger of discrimination going unchallenged."

Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Times. In a statement to the Verge, Apple spokesperson Josh Rosenstock disputed the claims in the lawsuit.

"Every employee has the right to discuss their wages, hours and working conditions and this is part of our business conduct policy, which all employees are trained on annually. We strongly disagree with these claims and believe they lack merit," Rosenstock said.

Bhakta said he hopes Apple will change its approach.

"Being able to speak openly about my work is so important to me," Bhakta said in the release. "It's disappointing that Apple, whose ethos is privacy and confidentiality, would try to monitor and censor me."

Other Apple employees have raised similar concerns of privacy violations and overly broad policies restricting discussion of pay.

A 2021 report by the Verge revealed concerns about data privacy among Apple workers required to link their personal accounts and devices to their jobs.

And in October Apple was accused by the National Labor Relations Board of trying to prevent employees from discussing pay equity by enforcing broad rules that prohibited workers from discussing financial incentives the company uses to reach sales goals by asserting that the topic included "confidential and proprietary information."

Biden looks to end rule allowing less pay for disabled people

By Caroline Petrow-Cohen

The Biden administration's Department of Labor is moving to phase out a controversial program that allows some employers to pay disabled employees less than the federal minimum wage, the department announced Tuesday.

Enacted in 1938 during the late years of the Great Depression, the measure was intended to increase employment opportunities for workers with disabilities but has been denounced by advocates who say it amounts to legalized discrimination. The measure is part of the Fair Labor Standards Act and based on the premise that disabled employees are less productive.

The Department of Labor's proposed rule would

phase out sub-minimum wages by ending the issuance of certificates that permit the lower wages and establishing a three-year period for employers to stop using existing certificates.

"One of the guiding principles of the American workplace is that a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay," said Wage and Hour Administrator Jessica Looman in a statement. "Opportunities and training have dramatically expanded to help people with disabilities obtain and maintain employment at or above the full federal minimum wage."

Around 40,000 American workers with disabilities currently receive less than the federally mandated minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. Some are employed through nonprofit organizations that aim to provide opportunities for people with autism, cerebral palsy or

other disabilities.

According to documents obtained by Bloomberg, some employers have paid workers as little as 25 cents an hour to sort clothes and 5 cents an hour to cut rags. The first certificates permitting sub-minimum wages were issued half a century before the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990.

The Department of Labor expects workers currently being paid a sub-minimum wage to move into full wage positions rather than face unemployment, acting Secretary Julie Su said in a statement.

The elimination of the low wages will "strengthen inclusion for people with disabilities in the workforce" and "improve their economic wellbeing," Su said.

The decision to phase out the Great Depression-era program is based largely on

evidence that legal and policy changes in recent years have lowered barriers to employment for disabled people.

The permission to pay low wages is no longer needed to incentivize employers to hire a disabled person, according to the Department of Labor's proposed rule.

"Employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities have vastly expanded in recent decades," the rule says. "The Department has tentatively concluded that subminimum wages are no longer necessary to prevent the curtailment of employment opportunities."

The fate of the program will rest with President-elect Donald Trump, who takes office next month. During Trump's first term in office, his administration worked to roll back existing labor

mandates and expand businesses' discretion over a range of issues.

Some Republican lawmakers have raised alarm over the potential elimination of a sub-minimum wage, writing in a letter to Su last December that the lower wages allow individuals with disabilities to work and transition into higher-paying jobs.

Rep. Virginia Foxx of North Carolina and Trump ally Elise Stefanik of New York were among the eight signees.

The letter, along with some parents of disabled adults, voiced support for so-called sheltered workshops that employ disabled workers and pay them less than \$7.25.

"For many Americans with disabilities, these centers provide a unique sense of purpose and community," the letter said.

Glendale's ServiceTitan seeks to raise \$500 million in its IPO

Company that makes business management software plans to offer 8.8 million shares priced at \$52 to \$57.

By Laurence Darmiento

ServiceTitan, a Glendale tech firm that makes business management software for plumbers, painters and other contractors, announced Tuesday that it wants to raise up to \$502 million in its initial public offering on the Nasdaq stock exchange.

The company said it plans to offer 8.8 million shares that would be priced between \$52 and \$57 each, according to a regulatory filing. At the top of that range, ServiceTitan would have a market capitalization of \$5.16 billion.

The company was valued at \$7.6 billion after a November 2022 funding round. ServiceTitan hasn't said when it plans to start trading.

ServiceTitan was founded in 2007 by two college friends from Glendale,



LILA SEIDMAN Glendale News-Press

SERVICETITAN counts about 8,000 contracting firms as customers, providing an end-to-end software suite that can manage payroll, scheduling and other tasks.

Ara Mahdessian, 39, and Vahe Kuzoyan, 41, whose fathers worked as contractors. The company previously raised about \$1.4 billion from venture firms, including Iconiq Growth, Bessemer Venture Partners and Battery Ventures.

It counts about 8,000 contracting firms as customers, providing an end-to-end software suite that can manage booking appointments,

generating estimates and processing invoices as well as payroll and dispatching workers. Clients range in size from family-owned contractors to large national franchises totaling more than 100,000 technicians. It charges a subscription fee for its services.

The company, which assists contractors nationwide, says it wants to expand the number of trades and

markets it serves. It employed 2,870 workers as of July 31 at its Glendale headquarters and offices elsewhere in the U.S. and internationally.

Competitors include BuildOps, Housecall Pro, Jobber and other companies that charge subscriptions for their web-based business management software.

ServiceTitan had filed confidential paperwork for

an \$18-billion public offering in 2022, according to Business Insider, but didn't move forward after the Federal Reserve sharply raised interest rates to combat inflation, freezing up the IPO market.

The company reported revenue of \$614 million in the fiscal year that ended Jan. 31, up nearly a third from a year earlier, and an operating loss of \$195 million, 28% less than in fiscal 2023. It had about \$147 million in cash and equivalents on hand as of Jan. 31 and was carrying \$175 million in long-term net debt.

The company's share structure will ensure that control remains with the founders — Mahdessian is chief executive and Kuzoyan president — who will retain all Class B shares, which are entitled to 10 votes each.

Lead underwriters on the IPO are Goldman Sachs Group, Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo and Citigroup. They have an option to buy an additional 1.32 million shares, which will be traded under the ticker symbol "TTAN."

Bloomberg contributed to this report.

OPINION

EDITORIAL

PERSONAL NOTE

California is still counting ballots. Is that a problem?

SOME CALIFORNIANS WERE carving Halloween pumpkins and taking their kids trick-or-treating when they cast their ballots in this year's election. Now they're putting up Christmas trees while officials are *still* tallying votes in some places.

With the vast majority of ballots counted, most of the races have been called by media organizations anyway, including some very close ones. In Orange County, Democrat Derek Tran was declared the winner over Republican Rep. Michelle Steel last week.

With that and a race in Iowa called the same week, California now claims the distinction of being home to the last congressional race in the country that has yet to be called. That's in the Central Valley's 13th District, where, with an estimated 99% of the votes counted as of Tuesday afternoon, Democrat Adam Gray was leading Republican Rep. John Duarte by 165 votes.

That doesn't mean everyone should keep hating on California for taking so long. First of all, we have more people than any other state. Second, every voter in the state is automatically mailed a ballot starting about a month before election day. In Los Angeles County, more than 70% of voters mailed in ballots or dropped them off, said Mike

Sanchez, a spokesperson for the county registrar-recorder. According to the office of the California secretary of state, nearly 90% of voters cast their ballots by mail in the 2022 midterm.

Californians are also allowed to register and vote by provisional ballot on election day. It takes more time to process those ballots.

California ballots had to be postmarked by Nov. 5 to be counted but could be received by election officials up to seven days later. All those mailed ballots have to be checked to see whether the signatures match the ones on the voter rolls. And if they don't, voters are contacted and told they can correct — or “cure” — the ballot with a signature.

The state's voters had until Dec. 1 to fix their ballots. And so we still have votes being counted even as Christmas shopping is in full swing.

L.A. County workers have been processing and counting ballots every day since Nov. 6, the day after election day, except for Thanksgiving, according to Sanchez. In fact, the week after the election, the county had shifts processing ballots around the clock.

Could some counties process and count ballots faster? Maybe. Some state legislators are interested in finding ways to expedite the



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

VOTERS (and a dog) at an L.A. County Fire Department facility in Venice. As of Tuesday morning, California had the country's last uncalled congressional race.

process.

But what's more important is that the slow pace has gone hand in hand with allowing voters ample time and a few ways to get their ballots in — and then to fix issues that might prevent them from being counted. The painstaking process of collecting and checking these ballots speaks both to election integrity and to giving voters access and opportunities to vote.

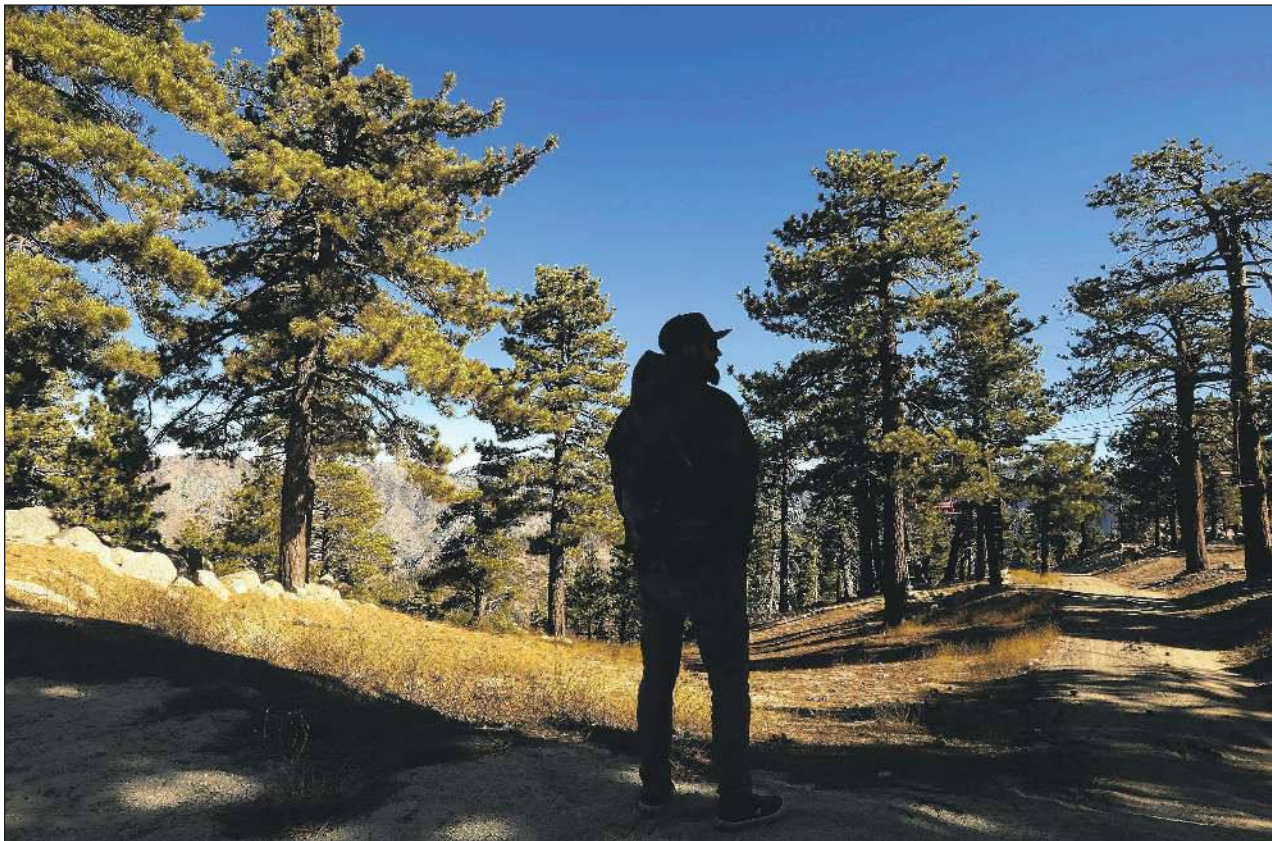
That makes it worth waiting for a few

races that seemed to take forever to call.

Closure is coming. All counties are required to submit their results for statewide elections by Friday. (And, as far as state officials know, no county has ever missed the deadline.) And the secretary of state is expected to certify statewide election results on Dec. 13 — still weeks before any of the winners' terms begin.

— CARLA HALL IS A MEMBER OF THE TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD

LETTERS



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

JOSHUA SHELTON, co-founder of a company seeking to revamp the Mt. Waterman Ski Resort, on Nov. 22.

What our mountains don't need

Re “Partners’ plan to remake ski resort raises concern,” Dec. 1

THE AREA AROUND WATERMAN MOUNTAIN (its true name) is one I know quite well, having led crews to work on trails in the area. It is adjacent to the rugged and beautiful San Gabriel Wilderness, home to many endangered animals such as the majestic Nelson bighorn sheep.

Two recent major fires have devastated this part of the San Gabriel Mountains, and it is slowly recovering.

The impacts proposed by the redevelopment of the Mt. Waterman ski area, such as flying helicopters close to the mountains and pumping out groundwater to make snow, would further strain this fragile environment. The benefit of this revamped resort for a few rich people is far out of proportion to the damage it would cause.

My father skied there in the 1940s and '50s when snow was more reliable. Climate change has drastically changed conditions to where it makes little sense to expand local ski operations. Perhaps some other use could be found that would have less of an impact.

ALAN COLES, Long Beach

‘What a bitter disappointment’

Re “President does an about-face, pardons his son,” Nov. 3

What a bitter disappointment President Biden has become. He claims his son was unfairly targeted for prosecution, so he pardoned him.

This is like the guy in a Lamborghini who whines that he was unfairly targeted for a speeding ticket because of his car. It doesn't change the fact he was speeding.

Last June, a jury found Hunter Biden guilty of federal gun crimes; in September, he pleaded guilty to federal tax charges. In pardoning his son, President Biden turns out to be just as self-serving as all the other distasteful politicians we read about.

I liked to think that we Democrats hold ourselves

to a high standard. I liked to think that our focus on the greater good is virtuous. I liked to think we value honesty and integrity.

I can no longer think that.

JERROLD COLEMAN
Santa Clarita

::

If a bully were to threaten to shoot your son, would you not try to protect him with a bulletproof vest?

This might not be the best comparison, but I think the president has Trump-proofed his son from all the threats of revenge against “enemies” promised by members of the incoming administration.

In fact, I think that all of those “enemies” also should be pardoned by the president.

When President Biden promised not to pardon his son, there was no real threat lurking in the future; that changed after the election.

I don't think that the president's pardon in any way can be considered interference with the rule of law and the Department of Justice, as many Republicans are now proclaiming. After all, Hunter Biden stood trial and was convicted. Where was the interference?

MARIE SLONSKI
Altadena

::

President Biden tells the world, “No reasonable person who looks at the facts of Hunter's cases can reach any other conclusion than Hunter was singled out only because he is my son — and that is wrong.”

No, Mr. President: After Hunter Biden was sober, he filed federal returns here in California that contained bogus deductions (including payments to escorts).

Those are the type of deductions and in amounts for which the Internal Reve-

nue Service will definitely bring criminal charges, no matter the offender's last name. And the amounts of understated taxes would generally produce prison time considering the mandatory federal sentencing guidelines for tax offenses.

KIP DELLINGER
Santa Monica

The writer is a certified public accountant who has written about tax practice and policy for trade publications.

::

“Such an abuse and miscarriage of Justice!”

I had to read that three times to believe what was falling out of President-elect Donald Trump's mouth regarding the Hunter Biden pardon.

If not an abuse and miscarriage of justice, what then was Trump's pardon of Charles Kushner, his son-in-law's father? And what then will it be when Trump starts

wholesale pardons of the attackers of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021?

Such hypocrisy has defined Trump since the day he descended the Trump Tower escalator in 2015.

SAUL ISLER
Los Angeles

Grim data on politics, families

Re “How to survive political disagreements this Thanksgiving,” Opinion, Nov. 27

Yes, we should all try to be more empathetic and humble when talking about politics with family during holiday get-togethers, and really throughout the year. It's not always that easy, however.

One in two adults is estranged from a close relation today, according to a national poll that my company, the Harris Poll, fielded shortly after election day. While the main explanation for such ruptures is something that a relative said or did, one in five attribute it directly to political differences.

Just more than half of those who are estranged because of politics want to reconcile to some degree. But most say reconnecting is unlikely, with one in five saying they never want to make up. Our survey shows that even a death in the family or an intervention by a relative isn't enough to get most to resume contact.

So yes, let's try to be less judgmental with relatives if it averts another family fracture. Just because political leaders increasingly are mean and downright hateful doesn't mean we have to be that way too.

WILL JOHNSON
Chicago

The writer is chief executive of the Harris Poll.

::

I would like to share my uplifting Thanksgiving experience.

I was about to check out at Smart & Final in West Hollywood last week when the young man behind me got my attention. He said, “Excuse me, but may I pay for your groceries?”

What? Why? I thanked him but said no, it wasn't necessary.

I am 82 and wore a hoodie and sweats. I am thin. Did I look impoverished? Or strange?

He insisted, explaining it was Thanksgiving and he just wanted to do something nice.

The checker was watch-

ing and she spoke up: I should let him.

Before I could do anything, he put his phone on top of the screen and clicked the button to pay. He explained that he planned to pay for the groceries of whoever was in front of him. I asked his name; he is Ryan.

This gesture of unsolicited generosity and kindness — especially in this time of such fear, division and rage — is very noteworthy. Ryan deserves high praise and thanks.

And thanks to The Times for providing a space to recognize him.

WENDY TUCKER
West Hollywood

Work rules could clog ERs

Re “GOP targets Medicaid with rehash of a bad idea,” Column, Dec. 1

Community clinics, such as Venice Family Clinic, are nonprofits that provide healthcare to people in need, many of whom rely on Medi-Cal, which is the federal Medicaid program in California.

Imposing federal work requirements for Medicaid, and therefore Medi-Cal, would endanger patients' health and increase costs for all of us.

Experience shows that when the qualification process for health insurance through the program is excessively complicated, otherwise eligible people are more likely to have their Medi-Cal coverage terminated. This can cause disruptions in ongoing care for chronic or acute illnesses.

Patients can become sicker, leading to costlier treatments and hospitalizations. Some people may forgo Medi-Cal altogether and instead seek routine care in emergency rooms, which reduces overall ER access and drives up healthcare costs.

About one-third of Californians receive healthcare coverage through Medi-Cal. Work requirements would have far-reaching ramifications — not just for Medi-Cal recipients, but for all of us.

MITESH POPAT, MD
Venice

The writer is chief executive of Venice Family Clinic.

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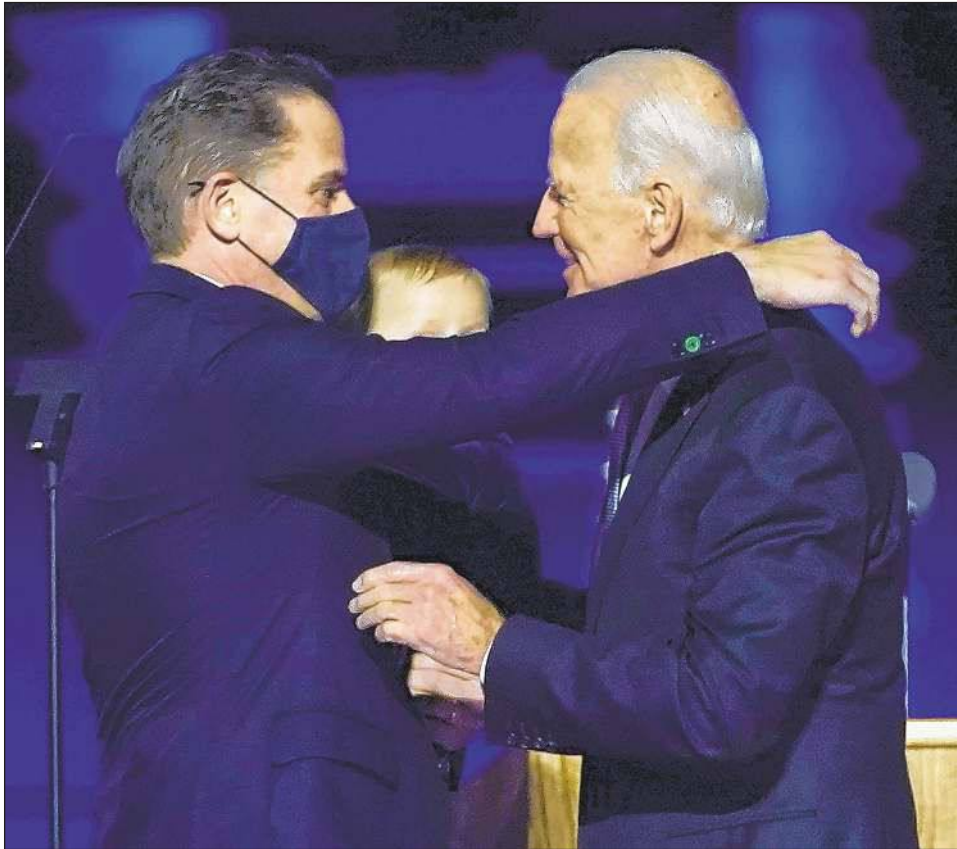


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OP-ED



ANDREW HARNIK Associated Press

JOE BIDEN embraces his son Hunter in Wilmington, Del., after the 2020 election.

An understandable, unforgivable pardon

President Biden’s son Hunter may have been singled out for prosecution, but he did in fact break the law

ROBIN ABCARIAN

IT CAME AS A surprise that President Biden unconditionally pardoned his son Hunter, a convicted felon, after repeatedly vowing that he would not. For the past few months, each time Biden or his press secretary was asked whether a pardon was in the cards, they both emphatically said no.



So much for one of the president’s favorite lines, “I give you my word as a Biden.”

Hunter, who was facing a potential sentence of years in prison for tax evasion and lying on a federal firearms application, is now free to pursue his career as a middling painter of overpriced art.

I admit that when I first heard the pardon news, I thought, “Good for you, Joe! Why should you follow the rules when no one on Planet Trump does? Let the people who voted to return a sex-offending, defaming, defrauding felon to the White House get a tiny taste of their own medicine.”

On second thought, however, it’s more complicated than that.

How can any of us be outraged at the way

Trump and those in his circle seem immune from the consequences of their malign actions if we applaud Biden’s pardon of his son for crimes he has either been convicted of or pleaded guilty to?

How can we be outraged that Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner received \$2 billion from the murderous Saudis if we think it’s perfectly fine for Hunter Biden to be paid millions of dollars for sitting on the board of Burisma, the Ukrainian energy company that was under investigation for corruption while his father was vice president and overseeing White House policy on Ukraine?

The real outrage is the general lack of accountability for the illegal, unethical or immoral behavior of children born into wealth and privilege whose only “talents” are their ability to exploit their proximity to powerful people. Nepo babies gonna nepo baby.

Hunter Biden was charged with lying on a gun purchase form, having claimed on penalty of perjury that he was not using drugs when, as he recounts in his memoir, he was a raging coke and meth addict. He was also charged with evading more than \$1 million in taxes, which he has since paid, along with penalties and interest.

The media and their critics tell the same lie

The press is not as important as journalists and their detractors claim, especially now.

JONAH GOLDBERG

THE AMERICAN MEDIA have a bootleggers-and-Baptists problem.

Coined by the economist Bruce Yandle, the term “bootleggers and Baptists” describes how groups that are ostensibly opposed to each other can have a shared interest in maintaining the regulatory status quo. Baptists favored Prohibition for moral reasons, but so did the bootleggers who profited from it by selling alcohol illegally. And politicians benefited from playing both sides.

An analogous dynamic surrounds the modern press. Across the ideological spectrum, from the Chomskyite left to the Bannonite right, partisans, politicians and journalists themselves exaggerate the power, influence and importance of “the media.”

Let’s start with the journalists. Members of all professions have a tendency to hold themselves in high regard. From physicians to plumbers, nearly everyone wants to believe that what they do matters. But with the possible exceptions of politicians and actors, journalists probably have the highest collective estimation of their own importance.

My point isn’t that they’re wrong — heck, I like to believe that what I do matters. It’s that they exaggerate not just their power and influence but also their celebrity and authority. Heart surgeons famously tend to be arrogant, but there is no endless stream of conferences, books, editorials, essays and academic courses dedicated to emphasizing the indispensable role of cardiothoracic medicine. Nor does any plumbing trade



RUTH BROWN Associated Press

NEWSPAPERS in New York in May. The public’s opinion of Donald Trump is one sign of the media’s limited influence.

journal proclaim that “Democracy Dies in Sewage” on its front page.

In psychological terms alone, it’s in journalists’ interests to encourage the widespread obsession with the Fourth Estate. But the media are a mess partly because they believe their own hype.

As a conservative media critic who has written scores of columns about the press’ liberal bias — which is real — I’ve had my own obsessions over the years. But I’ve grown weary of media criticism — again, not because the criticisms are necessarily wrong but because they overestimate the power of the institution they question. That’s the Baptist-and-bootlegger problem: The outside power and influence of the media is a lie that all sides have agreed on.

American journalism is like an exhausted prizefighter on the brink of collapse, being held up by his opponent to give the crowd a good show.

According to many on the

right, who often unwittingly repurpose formulations first introduced by lefty bogeymen, the media create narratives and manufacture consent — a term coined by Walter Lippmann and adopted by Noam Chomsky — that the rest of us are powerless to overcome.

But consider the example of climate change. The press has invested vast resources in covering the climate, which it has been hectoring the public and catastrophizing about for 20 years. And yet climate change remains at or near the bottom of every survey of the most important issues to the public. If the media can manufacture consent, why is there so little consent to their view of climate change?

This is just one example of the media thinking not just that it should but that it *can* define the interests of the public. The amount of energy and hand-wringing that has been dedicated to, say, revising Associated Press Stylebook guidance on

Was he unfairly singled out? Maybe, but he still broke the law.

As President Biden stated in announcing the pardon, “Without aggravating factors like use in a crime, multiple purchases, or buying a weapon as a straw purchaser, people are almost never brought to trial on felony charges solely for how they filled out a gun form. Those who were late paying their taxes because of serious addictions, but paid them back subsequently with interest and penalties, are typically given non-criminal resolutions.”

All true, which is why the government originally offered Hunter a deal that would have allowed him to avoid prison. He was to plead guilty to two misdemeanor counts of failing to pay his 2017 and 2018 taxes on time, and to agree to a diversion program that would allow him to avoid prosecution on the charge that he lied when he bought a handgun in 2018.

But a federal judge put the plea deal on hold last year, saying she did not want to “rubber stamp” an unorthodox and complex agreement that was reached without her input. Republicans piled on, filing an amicus brief complaining that the deal was too lenient and that the investigation was tainted by political interference from the Biden administration.

At that point, with the plea deal in tatters, Atty. Gen. Merrick Garland appointed a special counsel to the case. A month later, in September 2023, then-House Speaker Kevin McCarthy opened his sham impeachment investigation of the president, claiming Biden lied about his knowledge of his son’s business affairs.

The House’s eventual report basically found that Hunter used his daddy’s name to enrich himself. Yawn.

Last summer, after a salacious trial that, as the New York Times put it, “made painfully public Mr. Biden’s crack addiction, reckless behavior and ruinous spending,” a federal jury found Hunter guilty of three felony counts related to the gun application. In September, Hunter Biden avoided tormenting his family with another trial by pleading guilty to nine federal tax charges.

“There has been an effort to break Hunter — who has been five and a half years sober, even in the face of unrelenting attacks and selective prosecution,” President Biden’s statement said. “In trying to break Hunter, they’ve tried to break me — and there’s no reason to believe it will stop here. Enough is enough.”

Hunter may have been singled out for prosecution, but Hunter did in fact screw up. And President Biden, who has often said that Americans in the Trump era are engaged in a “battle to save the soul of the nation,” has shown that he, too, will warp justice for his own ends. I thought he was better than that.

Bluesky: @rabcarian.bsky.social
Threads: @rabcarian

How to save medication abortions in this Congress

Democrats should repeal an 1873 law that conservatives want to use to prohibit any shipment of mifepristone and misoprostol.

By Erwin Chemerinsky and Miles Mogulescu

BEFORE DEMOCRATS LOSE the White House and the Senate, they should push through legislation to repeal the Comstock Act, which could be used to prevent legal medically induced abortions everywhere in the United States. Given the success of ballot initiatives that protect the right to abortion in even conservative states in last week’s election, the politics could be right to repeal that 1873 law.

The Comstock Act was adopted to prohibit the interstate shipment of obscene materials. The law also outlawed the shipment of anything meant to prevent conception or end pregnancy.

The law, as it now stands, prohibits the shipment through the mail of “every article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for producing abortion.” It also forbids any “express company or other common carrier” from providing for “carriage” of such items “in interstate or foreign commerce.” The act provides for a sentence of up to five years for the first offense and 10 years plus a fine for the second.

In 2023, 63% of all abortions in states without total bans were medically induced rather than surgical. Conservatives want the federal government to invoke the Comstock Act to prohibit any shipment of mifepristone and misoprostol, the drugs used for medically induced abortions, by mail or other service, in effect ending them in the United States. This would apply even in states with strong abortion protections, such as California.

The Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025, a road map for Donald Trump’s second term as president, explicitly states that “following the Supreme Court’s decision in Dobbs, there is now no federal prohibition on the enforcement of this statute.” The Department of Justice in the next conservative Administration should therefore announce its intent to enforce federal law against providers and distributors of such pills.” In June, the right-wing National Review wrote “a new administration is free to enforce the Comstock Act.”

Enforcing it does not require passing any new laws. Late in the campaign, Trump said he’s not for new legislation requiring a nationwide abortion ban. But Jonathan Mitchell, who represented Trump in the Supreme Court, stated: “We don’t need a federal ban when we have Comstock on the books.” Just a handful of criminal prosecutions threatening doctors with five-year prison sentences for mailing abortion medicines could intimidate most doctors and other providers from doing so.

Even though the Biden administration refused to enforce the Comstock Act, over the last year, a number of commentators have called for it to be repealed. In June, Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minn.) introduced the Stop Comstock Act with co-sponsorship from numerous Democratic Senate and House members. The bill was endorsed by the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Smith stated at the time: “When MAGA Republicans say they intend to use the Comstock Act to control women’s decisions and enact a backdoor national abortion ban, we should believe them. Now that Trump has overturned Roe, a future Republican administration could try to misapply this 150-year-old Comstock law to deny American women their rights, even in states where abortion rights are protected by state law.”

Congress did not take up the bill. It is imperative that lawmakers do so in the upcoming lame-duck session.

Would they succeed? Before the new Congress is sworn in on Jan. 3, 2025, Democrats in effect hold a 51-49 Senate majority and a four-seat House minority; they wouldn’t need to persuade many Republicans in order to achieve this repeal. Until Jan. 20, Biden is the president who would sign the Stop Comstock Act.

Abortion is the one issue that Democrats won in this election. Voters in seven states — including conservative ones such as Missouri and Montana — passed laws protecting abortion rights. Even in Florida, which Trump won decisively, 57% of the voters supported an initiative safeguarding abortion rights, though this was less than the 60% needed in that state for it to pass.

Polls show that almost two-thirds of voters support broad abortion rights. In the House, a few Republicans might fall in line with voters’ wishes and back repeal. In the worst case, even if the effort to repeal the Comstock Act failed, it would be politically beneficial for Democrats to have Republicans on record voting to keep this archaic law.

In the weeks ahead, Democrats need to think about what they can do before they lose the White House and the Senate. Repealing the Comstock Act should be a top priority.

ERWIN CHEMEKINSKY, a contributing writer to Opinion and dean of the UC Berkeley School of Law, is the author of “No Democracy Lasts Forever: How the Constitution Threatens the United States.” MILES MOGULESCU is an attorney and Oscar-nominated filmmaker.

@JonahDispatch

Hochman sworn in, announces policy reversals

[Hochman, from A1] trist. A former Republican, Hochman easily parried Gascón's attempts to label him as a right-wing extremist and defeated the incumbent by a nearly 20-point margin, attracting voters in deep-blue L.A. County with a campaign that offered a "hard middle" approach to fighting crime.

"We are not here today as Democrats, independents or Republicans. ... We are here collectively as Angelenos who represent the 10 million clients of the district attorney's office who are looking to live in a county where safety is prioritized," Hochman said in a speech Tuesday. "Where laws are followed. Those who break them are held accountable. And the process to get there is fair, impartial, ethical and effective."

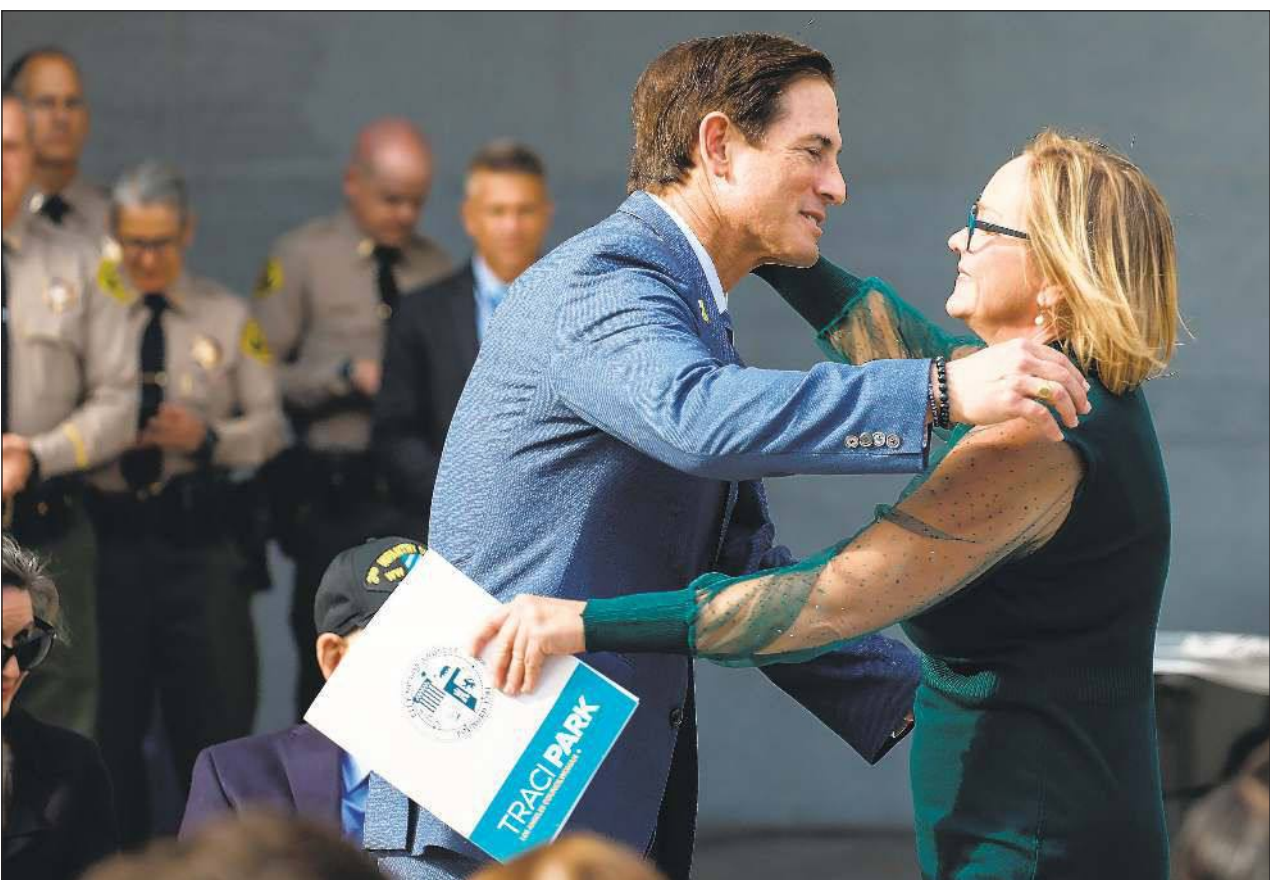
Schwarzenegger said he supported Hochman because he blamed Gascón for a rise in lawlessness and chaos in L.A. County.

Violent and property crime rose countywide from 2019 to 2023, mostly under Gascón's watch, but that also came during a post-pandemic-emergency crime surge that hit other California counties several times harder. Violent crime is down about 5% in Los Angeles this year, according to LAPD data, and criminologists have cast doubt on the idea that Gascón, or any progressive prosecutor, should be blamed for ebbs and flows of crime trends.

But to many voters, and the former governor, the connection couldn't be clearer.

"Government's No. 1 responsibility is to protect its citizens," Schwarzenegger said. "Let's never forget that. And Los Angeles has failed."

Hochman's speech was met by raucous cheers from hundreds of law enforcement leaders and prosecutors, many of whom waited in the street to chant for their new boss after years of warring with Gascón. Los Angeles Police Chief Jim McDonnell, Sheriff Robert Luna and former Dist. Atty. Jackie Lacey were all in at-



“WE ARE NOT here today as Democrats, independents or Republicans. ... We are here collectively as Angelenos,” said Dist. Atty. Nathan Hochman, above with Councilwoman Traci Park, at his swearing-in Tuesday.

tendance, as Hochman promised a renewed partnership with police under his administration.

Referring to the “facts and the law” as his North Star, Hochman repeated his promise to balance criminal justice reform and public safety, without contributing to California’s issues with prison overpopulation, which he called a systemic failure.

While he plans to let prosecutors pursue death verdicts again, Hochman said they can do so only in “rare” cases, including school shootings or the “cold-blooded assassination of a police officer.” A moratorium issued by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2019 prevents executions from taking place.

On misdemeanor crimes, Hochman vowed to bring charges where Gascón didn’t but also offer first-time nonviolent offenders prison alternatives, including diversion and restitution programs. In cases where defendants were driven to commit their crimes because of addiction issues, Hochman plans to have prosecutors offer a choice between prison or an 18-month intensive rehabilitation program.

“Filling the prisons to the breaking point is the failure of the criminal justice system,” Hochman said. “The true goal of an effective criminal justice administration is, ‘Can you deter the criminals from committing the crimes in the first place?’ ”

Hochman announced the formation of several task forces to deal with homelessness, fentanyl, human trafficking, organized retail crime, residential burglary and hate crimes, which would involve partnerships with local law enforcement and county and city agencies that aid the unhoused. He did not offer specifics about the task forces in his speech.

Some county leaders, in-

cluding Public Defender Ricardo Garcia, expressed concern about Hochman's potential to go too far in erasing Gascón's legacy.

“I don't think voters were voting to support the return of the death penalty, gang enhancements or charging children as adults,” he said, adding that he believes voters reacted to a sense of lawlessness on the streets driven by the county's homelessness crisis.

The new district attorney is also expected to retool the office's leadership structure by ousting some of Gascón's closest handpicked advisors. Last month, Hochman named Steve Katz, a 34-year veteran of the office who recently led the Public Integrity Division, to replace Joseph Iniguez as chief deputy district attorney. Hochman also booted former public defenders Shelan Joseph and Tiffany Blacknell from their positions as special counsel and chief of staff, ac-

cording to a November e-mail sent by Katz that was obtained by The Times.

Iniguez and Joseph did not respond to requests for comment, and it was not clear where they would be reassigned. Blacknell was transferred back to the public defender's office late Monday, according to two sources with direct knowledge of the decision who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

In a statement, Blacknell said her removal was a “direct consequence” of her criticisms of police brutality, and argued the decision was political in nature. She declined to comment further when asked about being transferred. Garcia declined to comment on the personnel changes.

“My removal is essentially a campaign promise from Hochman himself, aimed at silencing anyone who dares to challenge the entrenched status quo,” Blacknell said in a statement.

Hochman also elevated some of his opponents from the March primary to leadership roles. Former Judge Craig Mitchell, who has done extensive work on Skid Row, said he will lead a task force dedicated to combating the county's homelessness crisis. Deputy Dist. Atty. Maria Ramirez was also promoted to assistant district attorney, making her one of Hochman's closest advisors as he takes office.

When Gascón took office four years ago, he blindsided many in his office with an inauguration address that announced drastic policy changes, kicking off years of bitter contention and lawsuits between him and his staff. Leaders of the union that represented rank-and-file prosecutors say they're “hopefully optimistic” about improved relations with the incoming administration.

“We were encouraged by our meeting with him two weeks ago. He gave us more time than the prior administration had given us in four years combined and I would call it a productive and open meeting in which we discussed core concerns for our members,” said Ryan Erlich, vice president of the Assn. of Deputy District Attorneys.

Hochman also got a small taste Tuesday of the progressive forces determined to challenge him at every turn. A small group of protesters, led by Black Lives Matter Los Angeles, repeatedly booed and hissed from the street during Hochman's speech.

Melina Abdullah, the co-founder of Black Lives Matter in Los Angeles, has led a chorus of voices worried that Hochman won't aggressively pursue police misconduct cases, as Gascón did, due to his closeness with law enforcement groups.

One man appeared to be detained by law enforcement and led away, though representatives for the Los Angeles police and sheriff's departments could not provide any information early Tuesday afternoon.

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Iowa requests 2,000 voters' citizenship status in lawsuit

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DES MOINES — Iowa officials sued the Biden administration Tuesday for access to information on the citizenship status of more than 2,000 registered voters they had challenged in the weeks leading up to last month's election.

The complaint details a back-and-forth with the federal government after state election officials checked voter rolls against a list of people who had identified themselves as noncitizens with the state's Department of Transportation. The vast majority of the 2,176 individuals had subsequently voted or registered to vote. Some of them could have become naturalized citizens in the time that lapsed.

Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate's office requested information from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on the citizenship status of those individuals but did not receive it, the complaint alleges. The Associated Press left email messages with Homeland Security on Tuesday seeking comment on the lawsuit.

Federal authorities' "failure meant that the State had to rely on the best — imperfect — data it had available to ensure that no Iowan's vote was canceled by an illegal, noncitizen vote," a joint statement from Pate and state Atty. Gen. Brenna Bird said.

Two weeks before election day, when early voting was underway, Pate told county election officials to challenge those voters' ballots and have them cast provisional ballots instead.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa then sued Pate on Oct. 30 on behalf of four naturalized citizens who were named on the list, calling into question the accuracy of the Department of Transportation's information and alleging that Pate had infringed upon their right to vote. Their request to stop the ballot challenges was denied by a federal judge on Nov. 3.

It is illegal for noncitizens to vote in federal elections, and there has been no indication that they are doing so in significant numbers, though Iowa and some other states say they have identified some such cases — numbering in the dozens.

Some individuals in Iowa had registered to vote or voted before identifying themselves as noncitizens to the Department of Transportation, so Pate's office sent those names to law enforcement agencies, including Bird's office, for investigation and potential prosecution. But Pate's critics have said even those individuals might be wrongly identified as noncitizens since the Department of Transportation data has proved unreliable.

Pate's office has not released any additional information on the number of individuals who turned out to vote, whose ballots were challenged or whose citizenship status was ultimately confirmed. The Des Moines Register reported that, based on preliminary information collected from 97 of the state's 99 counties, at least 500 of the identified individuals proved their citizenship status and had their votes counted.

An additional 74 ballots were rejected, according to the Register, mostly because those who cast them did not return to prove their citizenship status.

The majority of the people on Pate's list did not vote in the 2024 election, according to the Register's data from county auditors.

Concern about elections being undermined by non-citizen voting had been a focus of political messaging this year from Donald Trump and other Republicans, even though such voting is rare.

Since no voters had been removed from Iowa's lists, Pate tried to differentiate Iowa from other states, such as Virginia, where more than 1,600 voters were purged from the registration list in the last two months in a program enacted through an Aug. 7 executive order from GOP Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

The U.S. Justice Department and a coalition of private groups sued Virginia in early October, arguing that state election officials were violating the legal mandate for a 90-day "quiet period" ahead of elections. The U.S. Supreme Court's conservative majority said that Virginia could proceed.

Ahead of the election, Pate said the Department of Transportation's information was the "only list" available to state officials unless they gain access to federal immigration records.

"We're balancing this process. We want everyone to be able to vote. That's why none of them have been taken off the voter rolls," he said. But "we do owe an obligation to make sure that they are citizens now."

CHARLIE NEIBERGALL Associated Press

SECRETARY OF STATE Paul Pate's request for information has been refused by Homeland Security.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/CALIFORNIA



A RUNNER PASSES the mini-amphitheater at the Albany Bulb. The ex-landfill is a popular Bay Area spot for hikers and dog walkers.

Regulators ordered testing after learning tons of hazardous waste was disposed there

BY TONY BRISCOE

State-ordered environmental testing has uncovered elevated levels of cancer-causing radiation at a popular spot for hikers and dog walkers in the Bay Area, according to a new report.

Over the summer, the city of Albany hired hazardous waste specialists with Cabrera Services Inc. to survey for the presence of radioactive waste at the Albany Bulb, a former municipal landfill

for construction debris that now features scenic hiking trails and a sprawling collection of outdoor art.

State regulators ordered the investigation after discovering a 1980 archival document that suggested a former Richmond chemical plant dumped 11,000 tons of waste at the former Albany and Berkeley landfill from 1960 to 1971. The document indicated the waste may have included alum mud — a potentially radioactive sludge and byproduct of alumi-

num processing.

After surveying the city-owned portion of the peninsula, Cabrera Services found 10 areas with elevated levels of gamma radiation — powerful electromagnetic energy that can penetrate human tissue and damage cells.

Cabrera technicians are recommending that Albany conduct soil sampling in three places, where it determined alum mud or a radioactive object may be buried.

Nearly four decades after Al-

bany's municipal landfill closed, it has evolved into an outdoor art gallery filled with sculptures made from reclaimed wood, stone and metal. Although state regulators have deemed landfill materials as hazardous waste, it hasn't deterred people from unearthing the refuse from the uncapped landfill and featuring it in eccentric pieces of art.

The new testing adds to the serious public health and safety concerns for one of the Bay Area's [See **Radiation**, B5]

San José State loses conference final to Colorado State after others refused to play.

BY STEVE HENSON

A season of protests, forfeits and lawsuits ended quietly on the volleyball court Saturday, with San José State losing the Mountain West Conference women's tournament final to Colorado State.

The loss kept San José State from automatically claiming a spot in the 64-

team NCAA tournament, which could have extended the controversy centered on the team's transgender player. Instead, top-seeded Colorado earned the automatic bid by winning in four sets.

Fewer than 200 spectators attended the match at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, but the fans were respectful, cheering every player during pregame introductions as well as during the action. Players encouraged one another throughout the match and exchanged hugs when it was over.

The only bit of political activity came when Col-

Colorado State star player Malaya Jones and teammates Kennedy Stanford and Naemah Weathers knelt during the national anthem. Their coach, Emily Kohan, told reporters the players have done so since 2020.

"They've knelt since their freshman year, when the Black Lives Matter movement was going on, and in this program, we raise critical thinkers to make decisions for what's important to them," Kohan said. "And ... they're Black players, and it's been important to them for five years. And they've stood their ground for saying that this is something

that they believe in, and we've all supported them."

The focus on volleyball and sportsmanship was a welcome departure from a roller-coaster season in which four Mountain West teams — Boise State, University of Wyoming, Utah State and University of Nevada, Reno — each chose to forfeit or cancel two conference matches with San José State.

Boise State also forfeited its conference tournament semifinal match to the second-seeded Spartans, who had a first-round bye and played only one match in the

[See **San José State, B2**]

LAPD is classifying Hannah Kobayashi, 30, as a 'voluntary missing person.'

BY SUMMER LIN,
LIBOR JANY,
AND RICHARD WINTON

Hannah Kobayashi crossed the U.S. border into Mexico on foot and alone, according to Los Angeles police.

Investigators in the case

of the missing Hawaii woman reviewed surveillance video from the Border Patrol on Monday, Los Angeles Police Chief Jim McDonnell said at an evening news conference.

“The footage clearly shows 30-year-old Hannah Kobayashi crossing the United States border on foot into Mexico,” police said in a statement. “She was alone, with her luggage.”

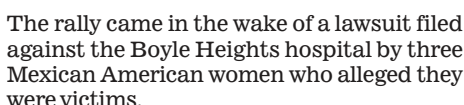
On Nov. 12, Kobayashi was seen using cash and her passport to get a bus ticket [See **Kobayashi**, B5]

DOLORES MADRIGAL, 1934 - 2024

She asserted she was forced to give consent in labor

GUSTAVO ARELLANO

On a fall morning in East L.A. in 1974, Dolores Madrigal and her husband, Orencio, ate breakfast while listening to ranchera radio station KWKW when a news segment aired that would change her life.



After hearing the story, the 40-year-old Madrigal wondered out loud to her husband: Was she one of those women?

The previous year, they had welcomed the birth of their second son, Sergio, at the hospital. Before going into labor, however, Madrigal shooed off a wave of nurses who asked if she wanted to have her fallopian tubes tied. She finally signed a form in the haze of her pre-labor pains, then quickly forgot about it.



REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS HEROINE

Dolores Madrigal, with son Oren, is interviewed for “No Más Bebés,” a film about the forced sterilization of County-USC patients in the 1960s and ’70s.

SPORTS ON THE BACK: Is it time for Lakers fans to panic? Dan Woike weighs in. B10

Team loses after season marked by anti-trans forfeits

[San José State, from B1] tournament.

The transgender player has been on San José State's roster for three seasons after transferring from a college on the East Coast, although this is the first season opponents have protested her participation.

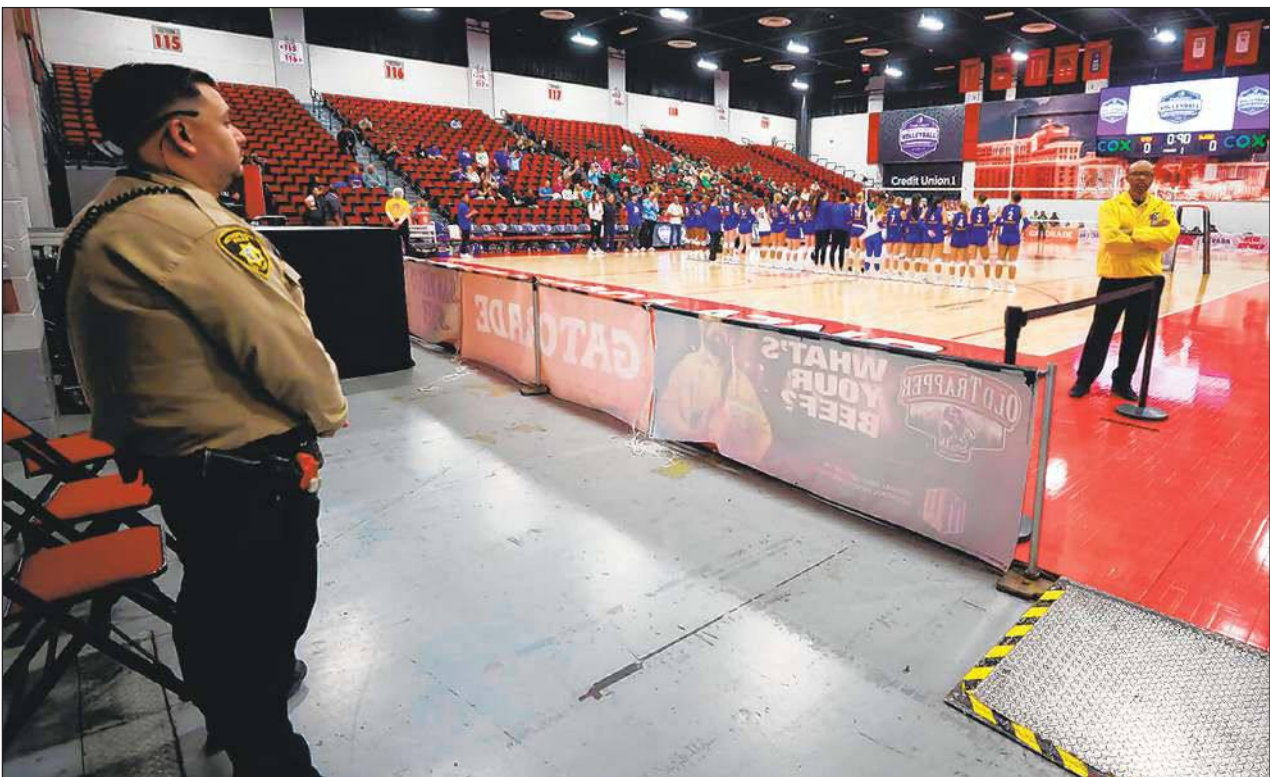
The Times is not naming the player because she has not publicly identified as transgender.

The issue became public when San José State co-captain Brooke Slusser joined a lawsuit in September against the NCAA, filed by former All-American swimmer Riley Gaines, an anti-trans-athlete activist.

The suit alleges that NCAA transgender eligibility policies violate Title IX and the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. Slusser alleges in the lawsuit that the inclusion of a transgender player poses an unfair advantage and safety hazards.

The NCAA adopted new rules a year ago on transgender athletes, who must document sport-specific testosterone levels at the beginning of their season and again six months later. They also must document testosterone levels four weeks before championship selections.

"We are steadfast in our support of transgender student-athletes and the fostering of fairness across college



SECURITY stood by in Las Vegas as San José State volleyball players were introduced before the team played Colorado State in the Mountain West Conference tournament Saturday. Fans and players were respectful.

sports," said Georgetown University President John DeGioia, chair of the NCAA Board of Governors. "It is important that NCAA member schools, conferences and college athletes compete in an inclusive, fair, safe and respectful environment and can move forward with a clear understanding of the new policy."

Nevertheless, the schools that forfeited volleyball matches have the backing of politicians in their states. Idaho's Republican Gov. Brad Little recently signed an executive order barring sports teams at Boise State and other public schools in the state from playing against teams that have transgender athletes.

San José State was left to piece together its season against opponents willing to play. Colorado State was one of those.

"Our team played their hearts out today, the way they have done all season," San José State coach Todd Kress said in a statement after the conference tournament loss. "This has been

one of the most difficult seasons I've ever experienced and I know this is true as well for many of our players and the staff who have been supporting us all along. Maintaining our focus on the court and ensuring the overall safety and well-being of my players amid the external noise have been my priorities."

Slusser, San José State associate head coach Melissa Batie-Smoose and 10 other current and former players filed another lawsuit Nov. 13 aimed at having the transgender player removed ahead of the tournament, stating that her inclusion violated Title IX rights for gender equity in federally funded institutions.

But a federal judge rejected the suit last week, and a day later another judge rejected Slusser's appeal.

The transgender player took the court along with Slusser, and San José State was defeated, ending a turbulent season that Kress said included attacks on social media.

"Our team prepared and was ready to play each match according to established Mountain West and NCAA rules of play," the coach said in his statement. "We did not take away anyone's participation opportunities. Sadly, others who for years have played this same team without incident chose not to play us this season."

"To be clear, we did not celebrate a single win by forfeiture. Instead, we braced for the fallout. Each forfeiture announcement unleashed appalling, hateful messages individuals chose to send directly to our student-athletes, our coaching staff, and many associated with our program."

Search continues for escaped killer

Convict serving 25 years to life fled during a trip to Kern County courthouse.

By SUMMER LIN

Law enforcement is looking for a convicted killer who escaped custody in Central California on Monday.

Cesar Hernandez was being transported about 10:45 a.m. for a court appearance at the Kern County Superior Courthouse in Dela-

no when he escaped, according to a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation news release.

"Upon arrival, Hernandez evaded staff custody, jumped out of the van, and is currently at large," the statement said.

Agents from the department's special services and investigative services units were searching for Hernandez with the assistance of the California Highway Patrol and police from Farland and Delano.

Hernandez was sen-

tenced to 25 years to life with the possibility of parole for first-degree murder, officials said. He was moved from L.A. County on June 27, 2019.

Hernandez, 34, is described as 5 feet 1 and 161 pounds. He has black hair and brown eyes and was last wearing an orange top and pants.

Officials have urged anyone who sees Hernandez or knows his location to contact law enforcement, call 911 or contact the incident commander at (661) 721-6300, ext. 5506.

Person missing after car plunged off cliff

A search is underway after a Cadillac SUV tumbled hundreds of feet near Point Mugu.

By CLARA HARTER

Authorities launched a search for a missing person Monday afternoon after learning that a car had tumbled hundreds of feet down a steep cliff near Point Mugu days earlier.

It's unclear why one of the occupants of the vehicle

waited days to report the incident, which took place off Deer Creek Road northwest of the Malibu border on Saturday, according to the Ventura County Fire Department.

The individual who eventually reported the crash managed to self-extricate from the mangled car and leave the scene in another vehicle — but did not call 911 that night, the Fire Department said.

Firefighters told On-Scene.TV that a white Cadillac SUV rolled over multiple times before coming to rest

on its roof 1,000 feet below the road.

On Monday afternoon, the occupant reported that two people who were in the car during the incident were missing, and a search was launched. Shortly after the search began, one of the passengers was located at home, the Fire Department said.

Authorities continued to search for the third occupant into the night using a helicopter, drones, K-9 teams and search and rescue crews, according to officials.

Los Angeles Times

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CITY & STATE



CARLIN STIEHL For The Times

THANKSGIVING, SOUTHLAND STYLE

People take to the beach near the Santa Monica Pier on Thanksgiving Day. This week’s forecast calls for full sunshine Thursday and Friday with rising temperatures and Santa Ana winds. **WEATHER, B6**

State Water Project allocation set at 5%

Preliminary forecast of supplies does not account for recent series of rainstorms.

By IAN JAMES

California water managers have announced their preliminary forecast of supplies that will be available next year from the State Water Project, telling 29 public agencies to plan for as little as 5% of requested allotments.

The state Department of Water Resources said Monday that the initial allocation is based on current reservoir levels and conservative assumptions about how much water the state may be able to deliver in 2025.

“We need to prepare for any scenario, and this early in the season we need to take a conservative approach to managing our water supply,” DWR Director Karla Nemeth said.

Last year, the state’s initial forecast was 10% of requested supplies, but the allocation was increased to 40% in the spring.

Officials said the initial water supply forecast does not take into account the series of storms that drenched much of the state in the last two weeks of November. The storms pushed precipitation to above-average levels in



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

LAST year, the state’s initial forecast was 10% of requested supplies, but the allocation was later raised to 40%. Above, the California Aqueduct near Los Banos.

Northern California for this time of year.

“Based on long-range forecasts and the possibility of a La Niña year, the State Water Project is planning for a dry 2025 punctuated by extreme storms like we’ve seen in late November,” Nemeth said. “What we do know is that we started the water year following record heat this summer and in early October that parched the landscape.”

She said officials considered runoff forecasts that account for how the hot, dry conditions in the summer and October left soils parched. When soils are too dry, runoff from the mountain

snowpack typically will be soaked up by the ground, reducing the amount of water flowing in streams and rivers to reservoirs.

A weak La Niña is forecast for this winter, and NOAA forecasters have said the pattern probably will bring drier-than-average conditions in much of the Southwest. They have also said, however, that the outlook is uncertain for much of California.

The State Water Project’s aqueducts and pipelines transport water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to 29 water agencies that supply 27 million people.

State officials update the allocation monthly and may increase their forecast based on the rainfall, snowpack and reservoir levels. A final allocation is typically announced by May or June.

Although the initial forecast is relatively low, the allocation should increase in the coming months, said Deven Upadhyay, interim general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which supplies water for 19 million people across six counties from Ventura to San Diego.

Southern California is continuing to benefit from the enormous quantity of water that flowed into reser-

voirs during 2023, one of the state’s wettest years on record.

Diamond Valley Lake, the Southland’s largest drinking water reservoir, is 97% full. And the MWD is projected to finish the year with a record 3.9 million acre-feet of water in reservoirs and underground storage areas.

“Our storage going into the end of the year is very good,” Upadhyay said.

The region has been able to store such large reserves in part through progress on conservation and investments in expanding water storage, he said.

The stored water will help “buffer us in the near term” if 2025 turns out to be a dry year, Upadhyay said, while the agency focuses on efforts to prepare for the next drought and the effects of climate change.

He said that includes, for example, implementing California’s newly adopted rules setting long-term conservation goals for urban suppliers, and investing in a plan to build an \$8-billion water recycling facility.

“As we’re thinking about water supply management, we’re less focused on the year to year variation, and we’re more focused on how do we invest in things that will allow us to be reliable for the long term,” Upadhyay said. “We want to make sure that we’ve got that long-term balance in view.”



Riverside County Sheriff’s Department

RIVERSIDE COUNTY sheriff’s officials found 2,805 bags filled with mushrooms at a Lake Elsinore home.

\$3 million in psilocybin mushrooms seized

Lake Elsinore man is arrested in connection with ‘large-scale’ growing operation.

By DAKOTA SMITH

Law enforcement officials seized nearly \$3 million in psilocybin mushrooms from a Lake Elsinore home this week and arrested one person as part of an investigation into an alleged “large-scale” mushroom growing operation, according to the

Riverside County Sheriff’s Department.

Jesse Arroyo, a 43-year-old Lake Elsinore resident, was arrested Tuesday on two felony drug-related offenses and two felony weapons violations, according to Riverside officials and on-line jail records.

The Sheriff’s Department said in a news release that Lake Elsinore law enforcement officials started their investigation following a report of a suspicious package delivered to a business in August. The pack-

age, which contained psilocybin mushrooms and marijuana products, was traced to Arroyo, officials said.

After serving a search warrant at Arroyo’s home, officials seized 445 pounds of vacuum-sealed mushrooms, 2,805 bags of mushrooms in various stages of growth, and several weapons, including semiautomatic rifles and semiautomatic handguns that lacked serial numbers, according to officials.

Officials said the raid targeted a “large-scale” psilocy-

bin operation.

“The property contained separate structures used for the cultivation, processing, and storage of large amounts of psilocybin mushrooms,” according to the news release.

Authorities also seized a semiautomatic handgun suppressor and two ballistic vests.

The arrest report says Arroyo was arrested on Lundell Road. There is no Lundell Road on Google Maps, but a Lindell Road runs through sparsely populated hills north of Lake Elsinore.

Father arrested in shooting death of a 9-year-old son

By RUBEN VIVES

Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies have arrested the father of a 9-year-old boy who was shot and killed while he was playing in the backyard of his grandfather’s home in Compton, the Sheriff’s Department announced Monday.

Homicide detectives zeroed in on the boy’s father shortly after the shooting Saturday night in the 15000 block of South Haskins Avenue. He was arrested Sunday, the same day that a vigil was held for the boy, whom family members identified as Princeton Nicholas Jones.

Creole Green, the boy’s mother, could not be reached for comment.

In a statement, the Sheriff’s Department identified Nicholas Jones, 32, as a suspect in the death. Detectives did not release any details

about his arrest. Jones was booked at the East Los Angeles sheriff’s station on suspicion of murder and child abuse resulting in death. He is being held in lieu of \$2-million bail. Reached by phone, Jones’ father declined to comment.

In an interview with KABC-TV, Green said she was devastated over the loss of her son.

“I have no words,” she told the station. “I lost my son, my only son, my firstborn son.”

In a GoFundMe post, Green said her son was a special young man with a brilliant mind and a warm heart.

“Princeton was a beacon of joy, lighting up every room he entered with his humor and infectious smile,” she wrote.

“He was adored by his friends, family, and community, who all cherished the incredible person he was becoming.”

State Department of Justice will investigate killing of man armed with fake gun by Santa Ana police

By CLARA HARTER

The California Department of Justice is opening an investigation into the fatal shooting by Santa Ana police of a man armed with a fake rifle on Sunday, authorities said.

The Santa Ana Police Department responded to reports of a man loading a rifle near Broadway and 2nd streets at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, according to the department.

After arriving on scene, two officers shot the man multiple times, said department spokesperson Officer Natalie Garcia.

The man, identified only as 30 years old and Latino, was transported to a hospi-

tal and pronounced dead, police said.

No more details about the shooting were released, including whether the man pointed the rifle at the responding police officers.

The rifle the man was reported to be carrying turned out to be an airsoft gun, a nonlethal replica firearm that shoots plastic pellets and is often used for games like paintball, police said.

There were no reports of bystanders or officers harmed during the incident and a critical incident debrief will be released in the coming weeks, police said.

On Monday, California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta announced that the California Department of Justice will conduct an independent

review of the shooting in accordance with Assembly Bill 1506, which requires the department to investigate all incidents of an officer-involved shooting resulting in the death of an unarmed civilian in the state.

After the DOJ’s California Police Shooting Investigation Team completes the investigation, the report will be turned over to DOJ’s Special Prosecutions Section within the Criminal Law Division for independent review and possible criminal charges.

Before AB 1506 was signed into law in September 2020, these incidents were handled by local law enforcement agencies and district attorney offices.

The goal of transferring

investigations to the DOJ was to increase trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve by having an independent body review incidents and determine possible criminal liability.

Under AB 1506, the DOJ is required to publicly release information about investigations and eventually publish its determination on criminal prosecutions.

If criminal charges are not deemed appropriate, the DOJ will release a report with an explanation of what took place during the incident and why criminal charges were not pursued as well as recommendations to improve the practices of the law enforcement agency involved.

DOLORES MADRIGAL, 1934 - 2024

A ‘cheerleader’ for women who were forcibly sterilized

[**Madrigal**, from B1] the day after the KWKW report confirmed that the document authorized doctors to sterilize Madrigal.

She and her husband had dreams of a large family. Instead, Orencio turned to alcohol. Dolores sunk into such a depression that others had to take care of her young sons for months.

But when lawyers representing Mexican American survivors of forced sterilization tracked her down in 1975 and asked if she wanted to join a class-action lawsuit against County-USC alleging doctors had violated their clients’ civil rights to bear children, Madrigal quickly said yes. She became the lead plaintiff.

“Dolores emerged as kind of the cheerleader for the group,” said Antonia Hernández, former head of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the California Community Foundation. She was one of the lawyers who represented the 10 women who joined the case, formally titled Madrigal vs. Quilligan. “She’d say, ‘They did this to us, *y no está bien* [and it’s not right].”

The lawsuit was unsuccessful but proved a landmark. The California Department of Health soon after began to offer sterilization information in English and Spanish. Hernández became a civil rights icon who focused on fighting for Latinos through most of her career. Gloria Molina, the chair of a Chicana group that had agreed to bear any legal costs for the plaintiffs and appeared alongside Madrigal at a press conference announcing the lawsuit, went on to forge a pioneering career as an Eastside politician.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors formally apologized in 2018 to all women forcibly sterilized at County-USC. A monument in their name was dedicated there four years later. Madrigal vs. Quilligan continues to be taught in universities and retold in academic books as a cautionary tale of eugenics and public health gone wrong, its plaintiffs hailed as reproductive-rights heroines.

“Dolores’ courage was tremendous,” said Virginia Espino, who wrote about the case in her 2007 doctoral dissertation.



BEN OLENDER Los Angeles Times

MADRIGAL VS. QUILLIGAN
Latina activist Gloria Molina, left, sits next to Dolores Madrigal during a news conference announcing the class-action lawsuit against County-USC in 1975.

sertation. “She literally defended our right to exist.”

But when Espino decided soon afterward to co-produce a documentary, “No Más Bebés,” about the case, its namesake was nowhere to be found.

Espino asked parishioners at Sacred Heart Church in Lincoln Heights, where Madrigal had faithfully attended Mass for decades, about her whereabouts and put the word out in other Catholic parishes across Los Angeles. A private detective finally found Madrigal living in Las Vegas with her oldest son, Oren, who didn’t learn about his mother’s tragic, historic past until answering the researcher’s call.

“I asked my mom, ‘How come you never told me?’ and she really didn’t have an answer,” Oren told The Times in a recent interview. “But maybe it was better that she didn’t because a

younger me would’ve been way too angry. I’m still angry. But after she told me, I wanted to take care of my mom and her trauma more than ever.”

Dolores Madrigal died Nov. 9 in Las Vegas of natural causes. She was 90.

She was born in the small town of Villa Purificación, Mexico, in 1934 and migrated to the United States in 1965. Madrigal legalized her status with the help of a white family for whom Dolores

took care of a developmentally disabled son, according to Oren.

In East L.A., she reunited with her childhood sweetheart, Orencio. They married in 1971, and had their sons one year after the other.

“He was so happy,” Madrigal said of her husband in “No Más Bebés,” as home footage showed her cooking in their kitchen and Orencio playing with their sons. After the couple found out about her surreptitious ster-

ilization, she said: “All our plans came tumbling down.”

Hernández first met Madrigal in 1975, cold-knocking on her door after finding out about Madrigal’s plight from documents given to her by a County-USC whistleblower.

“She had this lust for life — happy, vivacious and a don’t-take-crap-from-nobody attitude,” Hernández recalled. “The one you couldn’t break down when you had to testify.”

That’s what County-USC lawyers tried to do during the trial, which was heard before a federal judge because the legal team for the 10 women didn’t think they’d get a fair trial from a jury. At one point, defense lawyers produced the document Madrigal had signed just before giving birth to Sergio, which featured her signature next to the phrase “*No más hijos por vida*” — no more children for life. Madrigal responded she didn’t recall signing the paper but reiterated “she was in bad pain and very frightened” at the time, according to Hernández’s notes of the deposition.

The retired attorney said she stayed in touch only intermittently with Madrigal after the case because “the pain was too much for everyone involved.”

Madrigal went on to work as a teacher’s aide at Lincoln High in Lincoln Heights before leaving in the mid-1980s to care for her ailing husband and their two sons, who had joined gangs.

“Me and my brother are still alive because of my mom’s prayers,” Oren said. “When I was in jail, she used to be one of the first people to stand in line — she would do it for six, seven hours just to see us for 15 minutes. She didn’t have much money, but she would send it all to us.”

After living in the Los Angeles area for decades, Mad-

rigal relocated to Las Vegas in the 2000s to be near a sister while her sons served their sentences. When Oren finally got out, the two moved in together. He remembered a mother “with a great sense of humor and a sarcastic wit” who liked to dote on her Chihuahua-dachshund mix, Hercules, and attend daily Mass.

“Every day when she’d go on the bus for her adventures, she would make friends,” Oren said. But he long noted a melancholy that “all of a sudden made sense” when the private researcher hired by Espino to track her down for “No Más Bebés” contacted him. Oren persuaded his mother to appear but she agreed to just one day of interviews, according to Espino, and declined to participate in any publicity or screenings for the documentary, which debuted in 2015 and was nominated for an Emmy.

“She put herself out there in the ’70s in a very public way,” Espino said. “It took a lot out of her. [Madrigal] didn’t want to do it again. ... She had this shyness of her, but a fierce courageousness. She felt she was wronged, and she wanted people to know that. And she wanted the public to know this violation happened not just to her, but to so many others.”

Oren saw only part of “No Más Bebés” at his home before turning it off “because it was too tough” to bear. His mother never saw it.

“Sadly, a lot of immigrants — a lot of women — they just take abuse and don’t do anything about it,” he said. “She didn’t take what happened to her. She did something about it.”

Madrigal is survived by her sons, Oren and Sergio; four grandchildren, Jose Angel, Jimmy, Esteban and Andrea; and a sister, Antonia Nuñez. Andrea is expecting her first child next year.

Man charged with smuggling weapons

[**Weapons**, from B1] itary equipment, outside the hands of our adversaries where they can harm us or our allies.”

Wen, who arrived in the U.S. in 2012, was “key to this scheme and central to this plot” by North Korea, Estrada said.

Before leaving China, Wen met with North Korean officials at two consulates, where they allegedly directed him to procure goods in the U.S., according to a Nov. 26 criminal complaint.

In an interview with federal authorities, Wen said he was probably chosen for this role because he was good at smuggling, according to prosecutors.

Wen told authorities that while he was in the U.S., two North Koreans living in China, whom he identified as Jin Yong Nan and Cui, reached out to him. Wen kept in contact with Cui via an encrypted messaging platform, according to the complaint.

In his interview with federal authorities, Wen allegedly admitted he shipped two containers of firearms and other items to North Korea via Hong Kong in October and December 2023. One shipment was labeled as a refrigerator, another as camera parts, Estrada said.



U.S. Department of Justice

FEDERAL AUTHORITIES said they seized military and surveillance equipment from Shenghua Wen’s home in the city of Ontario. He was arrested Tuesday.

Wen allegedly received money for the containers and shipping fees — totaling at least \$2 million — from North Korean officials.

To obtain the weapons, Wen paid \$150,000 to buy Super Armory, a business with a federal firearms license that he later registered in Texas. Wen allegedly used the company and people known as straw purchasers to assemble shipments, according to the complaint. Authorities said he would drive the guns and ammo from Texas to California.

Federal authorities said they also found emails and text messages from January to April, between Wen and a U.S.-based broker about ob-

taining a civilian airplane engine. During a September interview with authorities, Wen said North Korean officials told him to purchase plane engines, which would be used to help develop the North Korean military drone program, according to the complaint.

At Wen’s home on Aug. 14, law enforcement officials seized two devices that he allegedly intended to send to North Korea for military use: a chemical threat identification device and a handheld countersurveillance gadget that detects electronic eavesdropping, according to the complaint.

On Sept. 6, law enforcement seized about 50,000

rounds of 9-millimeter ammunition — stored in his white Ford van — that he planned to send to North Korea, authorities said.

Wen told authorities he believed the North Korean government wanted the items he sent to prepare for an attack against South Korea, according to the complaint. Wen allegedly told authorities that the government wanted him to obtain military uniforms to be used by the North Korean military to disguise its soldiers during a surprise offensive.

Wen’s student visa was valid from Dec. 5, 2012, to Dec. 3, 2013, according to the complaint. Estrada said it’s unclear whether that was legitimate and whether he was actually studying.

Wen was ordered removed from the country in 2018 and, after a 2021 arrest, he signed a form acknowledging his overstay status, according to the U.S. attorney’s office. It’s unclear how he was able to stay in the country.

Estrada said authorities learned about Wen through multiple tips, including from people from whom he tried to purchase items.

“We can’t say how long he was operating this. The investigation continues,” Estrada said.

Obituaries

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Edward L. Smith
September 1934 -
November 24, 2024

Edward L. Smith, 90, passed away peacefully at home in his sleep on November 24, 2024, after a brief illness. Born in Los Angeles, California in 1934 to Edward L. Smith, Jr., and Helen Smith, he lived in Los Angeles all his life. After graduating from Hollywood High, he attended UCLA where he met his future wife Anne in a bowling class; they were married in 1959 after he completed his engineering and MBA degrees. A summer job at Douglas Aircraft turned into an entire career—he stayed with the company providing long-range financial forecasting even after it became first McDonnell Douglas and then Boeing.

Ed was a lifelong avid hiker and fisher; his favorite place to spend summer vacations was Mammoth Lakes. He raised and trained numerous golden retrievers, and after retirement enjoyed traveling through the Southwest collecting Native American baskets and pottery.

He is survived by Anne Smith, his wife of 65 years, his son Steve and his partner Kerry, his daughter Christy, son-in-law Bruce and granddaughter Amelia.

There will be no funeral service; we hope everyone will celebrate his memory in their own ways. Donations in his memory can be made to the West Los Angeles Obedience Training Club or the UCLA School of Engineering.



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U.S. 9th Circuit has blocked a judge’s call for temporary sites on West L.A. campus.

By Doug Smith

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has extended its stay of a judge’s order to build housing on the VA’s West Los Angeles campus, setting an expedited April hearing for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ appeal.

The order ends U.S. District Judge David O. Carter’s fervently pursued goal to have as many as 200 units of the temporary housing opened by early next year.

The VA appealed in October Carter’s sweeping order that it build hundreds of temporary and permanent

housing units on the campus, saying that it would cause “irreparable harm” by forcing the agency to divert funds — up to \$1 billion for all the housing — from crucial services to veterans.

In the weeks since issuing his judgment, Carter incessantly pushed VA officials and the veteran plaintiffs’ housing experts to quickly produce modular units on the parking lot of UCLA’s Jackie Robinson stadium and other vacant parcels on the campus.

After Carter’s repeated admonishments to “get it done,” the plaintiffs’ experts, Steve Soboroff and Randy Johnson, the developers of Playa Vista, had teamed with the global architecture firm Gensler to draw up plans they said could be realized by spring.

Under pressure from the judge, VA officials said they

could pay for the modest cost of the temporary units and worked with Soboroff and Johnson to identify sites and provide maps of utilities.

But meanwhile, the government appealed. The appeals court’s Nov. 8 emergency stay stalled the purchase of the modular units and blocked the developers’ access to the VA property.

Carter’s orders stem from a class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of veterans that alleged the VA had failed in its duty to provide housing on the campus for disabled and homeless veterans and had illegally leased portions of the 388-acre campus to UCLA, Brentwood School and several other outside interests.

After a four-week trial in August, Carter ordered the VA to produce 1,800 new sup-

portive housing units on the campus and 750 temporary housing units. His ruling also invalidated leases of VA property, including to UCLA and Brentwood School, and ordered the VA to increase its outreach staff. He subsequently backed off that number of temporary units, while issuing an emergency order to immediately build up to 200, including 32 on the parking lot of UCLA’s Jackie Robinson baseball stadium.

Plaintiffs’ attorney Mark Rosenbaum of the pro bono firm Public Counsel said he appreciated the accelerated schedule but not the government’s position.

“The government’s action in seeking a stay, claiming a lack of resources, makes a lie of their stated commitment to end veteran homelessness as rapidly as possible,” Rosenbaum said.

Health officials say level of radiation is low risk

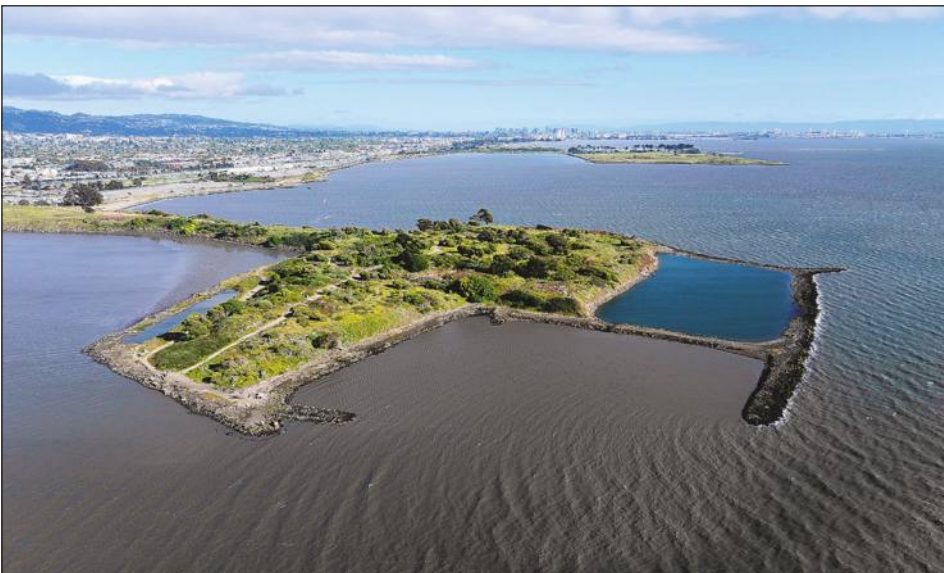
[Radiation, from B1] most cherished coastal spaces.

Gamma radiation is particularly concerning as this high-frequency energy can move through solid objects and human tissue, damaging DNA molecules and raising a person's risk for cancer, according to Daniel Hirsch, retired director of environmental and nuclear policy at UC Santa Cruz.

"It's like subatomic bullets being fired at the cells," Hirsch said. "There is no safe level. Every level carries some risk."

California Department of Public Health officials, however, said the initial gamma radiation observed at the Albany Bulb presented a "low level of risk to the public."

"The survey results indicate that most of the site is consistent with normal background radiation levels, but 10 locations showed elevated readings," a CDPH spokesperson said. "Our initial assessment shows that a



PAUL KURODA For The Times

THE ALBANY BULB, formerly the Albany Landfill. The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Board recently learned that hazardous waste was disposed at Albany and Berkeley's landfills, both of which are now public parks.

person would have to spend approximately 20 hours on an elevated area to receive a dose equivalent to one dental X-ray."

The Cabrera Services report noted the radioactivity at the Albany Bulb is consistent with other landfills that accept construction debris,

which may contain naturally radioactive material, such as granite. It remains unclear whether the levels of radiation are compatible for

a publicly accessible space.

"The City doesn't have enough information from the report to reach specific, final conclusions on ultimate public health risk," said Brennen Brown, spokesperson for the city of Albany. "The next round of investigation will include soil sampling and shallow subsurface measurements that will help inform public risk levels. At this time, based on the information from the report, the City is not aware of any need to take additional actions to protect health and safety."

Cabrera Services also said it's unlikely the radioactivity is from large deposits of alum mud. Based on a review of historical documents, it said other parts of the human-made peninsula probably accepted this waste.

Cabrera staff highlighted adjacent tracts of land owned by the East Bay Regional Park District, which had previously been a pri-

vately owned landfill.

Cabrera staff and Albany city officials, however, did not immediately inform the East Bay Regional Park District. The park district learned about the findings and test results only after a Times reporter reached out for comment.

Jordan Traverso, a spokesperson for the park district, said regulators had not asked for them to test its property.

Meanwhile, the city of Berkeley is working toward examining its own survey for gamma radiation at Cesar Chavez Park, which was built atop the former municipal landfill. The city partnered with UC Berkeley Nuclear Engineering researchers to fly a drone survey over the 90-acre park and sweep small areas on foot, according to city spokesperson Seung Lee.

The test results, he said, will be released after researchers clean and analyze the data.

LAPD categorizes Hawaii woman as voluntarily missing person

[Kobayashi, from B1] to Union Station in order to reach the San Ysidro border crossing, where she crossed into Mexico through a tunnel shortly after noon, McDonnell said.

Kobayashi has been classified as a voluntary missing person, McDonnell said, adding that law enforcement will be notified if she decides to reenter the U.S.

Kobayashi went missing Nov. 8 after catching a flight from Hawaii to Los Angeles, with a connecting flight that would ultimately take her to New York, where she planned to visit relatives. Her family became worried after she landed at LAX and sent them cryptic text messages, suggesting that someone was trying to steal her money and identity.

McDonnell said he was aware of the questions surrounding the woman's missed connection at LAX, saying the department's investigation "corroborated by video evidence clearly shows Hannah at LAX, ap-

pearing unharmed after arriving from Maui on Nov. 8 of this year."

"For unknown reasons, she decided not to board her prescheduled flight to New York," he said. He said that police had uncovered no evidence that she was being trafficked or was involved in any criminal activity.

Kobayashi's family said in a statement Monday that they weren't giving up the search for their relative and urged law enforcement and the public to "stay focused on finding her and to avoid speculative conclusions."

"We are deeply grateful for the urgency and dedication law enforcement has shown in investigating Hannah's disappearance," the statement read. "Our family remains hopeful that Hannah is safe and urges everyone to continue the search. The search is far from over, and we are committed to doing everything possible to bring her home safely."

Sydni Kobayashi, her sister, said on social media that

"[b]ased on information, surveillance footage reviewed and information shared with us, these are the facts known to my mother and I: It does not appear that Hannah intentionally missed her flight."

Police, however, uncovered old social media posts suggesting that Kobayashi had "expressed the desire to step away from modern connectivity," McDonnell said. Police believe that Kobayashi may have left her phone in Los Angeles instead of taking it with her to Mexico.

The chief urged her to contact her family, law enforcement or someone from the U.S. Embassy in Mexico to assure them of her well-being.

"She has a right to her privacy, and we respect her choices," he said, "but we also understand the concern loved ones feel for her; a simple message could reassure those she cares about."

The LAPD investigation will not take the search into

Mexico, McDonnell said, but he encouraged anyone with information about Kobayashi's whereabouts to contact law enforcement.

Sydni Kobayashi was critical of the investigation, citing "lack of communication surrounding some important details" and saying the family had felt "excluded from potentially crucial developments." She noted, however, that they were "hopeful and optimistic" that police were doing their best to find Kobayashi.

Deputy Chief Alan Hamilton pushed back on the family's criticism at Monday's news conference, saying there had been "daily communication and contact with family members," as well as considerable resources expended, including sending investigators to the U.S.-Mexico border to examine the surveillance footage.

According to Kobayashi's family, she landed at LAX on Nov. 8 and missed her connecting flight to New York City because of a short lay-

over. Kobayashi stayed overnight in Los Angeles and was seen the next day at the Taschen bookstore at the Grove, an open-air shopping mall in the Fairfax district.

On Nov. 10, Kobayashi was captured on video outside a Nike event near the Grove and was believed to have returned to LAX, according to a family statement.

On Nov. 11, Kobayashi was seen talking to a ticketing agent at LAX; she then boarded the Metro C Line at the Aviation/Century station around 9 p.m., her family said. She transferred at the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks station and was seen in video leaving the Pico station with an unknown person.

On Nov. 12, Kobayashi was captured on video at the Greyhound bus terminal at Union Station in downtown L.A. around 6:30 a.m., according to her family.

Just a few hours later, according to police, the woman crossed into Mexico.

Family members have raised alarm over "strange" text messages sent from Kobayashi's phone Nov. 11, shortly before she vanished. Kobayashi reportedly texted them that she was afraid someone had stolen her identity and all of her money. Her family said they tried to get hold of her, but her phone had been shut off.

After Kobayashi's disappearance, her father, Ryan, flew to Los Angeles to help look for his daughter. The elder Kobayashi was found dead last week near LAX in what police said was an apparent suicide.

The body of Ryan Kobayashi, 58, was found in a parking lot in the 6100 block of Century Boulevard. According to the Los Angeles County medical examiner, Ryan Kobayashi died from blunt force traumatic injuries.

"I'm very sorry for the family for all that they've been through," McDonnell said during Monday's news conference.

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LEGAL NOTICES 1300

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Business Names

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NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): MASTER ROAD SERVICE, INC., a California Corporation; Kfir Cohen, an individual; Chris Doe, an individual; and DOES 1 through 30, inclusive,

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): Priscilla Caputo, an individual

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below. You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. iAVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación. Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.

Legal Notices

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL)

Case Number (Numero del Caso): 24VECV03048

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): GERA GORVITS, an individual

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): U-HAUL CO. OF CALIFORNIA, a California corporation

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JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ONNOI

SUHL

YKREUT

OCBWYO

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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



THE ROMAN EMPIRE WAS CRUMBLING AND WOULD ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: QUILT FLASH GROOVY CANNON Answer: The zeros' attempt to arrange themselves into a positive number was — ALL FOR NOTHING

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The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): VAN NUYS COURTHOUSE WEST 1440 Erwin Street, Van Nuys, CA 91401 Van Nuys, CA 91401

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Dan A. Everakes 500 N Brand Boulevard Glendale, CA 91203 8185468686

Date: (Fecha) 06/26/2024

David W. Slayton Clerk (Secretario) G. Molina Deputy (Adjunto)

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): Van Nuys Courthouse East 6230 Sylmar Ave. Van Nuys, California 91401

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Gavril T. Gabriel 8255 Firestone Blvd. Downey, California 90241 562-758-8210

Date: (Fecha) April 01, 2021

Sherri R. Carter Clerk (Secretario) L. Marquez Deputy (Adjunto)

Today in Southern California

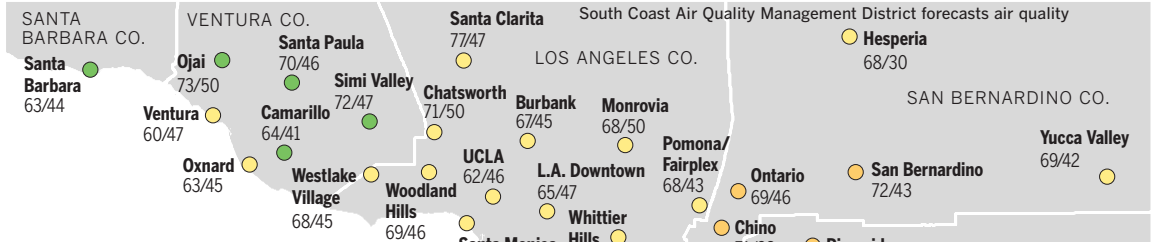
Remaining dry; areas of clouds to start: A slight uptick in low-level moisture with a broad, upper-level low crossing the area could result in low clouds and areas of fog to start Wednesday morning along and near the coast. As high pressure aloft and at the surface increases to the north, look for a return to full sunshine Thursday and Friday with rising temperatures. Low-end Santa Ana winds will set up Thursday night.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin		Valleys		Beaches		Mountains		Deserts	
Today	65 47		70 50		61 46		54 19		82 54	
	Fog to sunshine		Mostly sunny		Fog to sunshine		Sunshine		Mostly sunny; warm	
Thursday	Mostly sunny		68/50		Mostly sunny		75/55		Sunny; warm	
Friday	Sunny; warmer		78/52		Sunny; warm		79/53		Sunny; warmer	
Saturday	Sunny; warm		78/51		Sunny; warm		79/49		Sunny; warm	
Sunday	Not as warm		67/52		Not as warm		67/48		Cooler	

Air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO
Inner waters: Light wind becoming west 5-10 knots in the afternoon. Seas 2-4 feet. Mixed swell west and south 2-3 feet.

Surf zone: The risk for strong rip currents is moderate at Ventura, L.A. and S.D. county beaches and low elsewhere.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-3'	7 sec	W	58
Ventura	2-4'	13 sec	SW	57
Los Angeles	2-4'	13 sec	SW	60
Orange	1-3'	14 sec	S	60
San Diego	2-4'	13 sec	SW	62

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.				
Today	9:56a	5.9 Hi	3:24a	2.9 Lo
	-----		5:49p	-0.4 Lo
Thu.	1:01a	3.4 Hi	4:13a	3.1 Lo
	10:43a	5.6 Hi	6:40p	-0.2 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people
Las Vegas, 45
Phoenix, 45
Los Angeles, 45
San Francisco, 60

California cities*

City	Tue.*			Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo		Hi	Lo	
Anaheim	67	48	--	66	43	71	47		
Avalon/Catalina	63	49	--	59	54	63	56		
Bakersfield	65	44	--	66	44	66	44		
Barstow	70	41	--	71	40	72	39		
Big Bear Lake	56	23	--	54	19	55	20		
Bishop	66	28	--	62	26	62	30		
Burbank	68	44	--	67	45	75	50		
Camarillo	63	41	--	64	41	69	50		
Chatsworth	71	46	--	71	50	75	53		
Chino	71	41	--	71	38	78	43		
Compton	68	51	--	65	46	68	48		
Dana Point	63	49	--	62	46	64	48		
Death Valley	73	51	--	78	53	79	54		
Del Mar	64	49	--	64	46	66	47		
Escondido	69	38	--	71	37	72	41		
Eureka	54	39	--	56	41	57	41		
Fallbrook	70	38	--	70	39	75	43		
Fresno	63	43	--	60	44	58	44		
Fullerton	68	52	--	67	45	71	46		
Hemet	72	36	--	73	35	77	39		
Hesperia	64	36	--	66	34	66	32		
Huntington Beach	63	51	--	61	46	62	47		
Idyllwild	62	41	--	63	39	65	41		
Irvine	70	49	--	65	44	68	47		

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set		
Los Angeles Co.	6:43a/4:44p	6:42a/4:43p
Orange Co.	6:42a/4:43p	6:48a/4:47p
Ventura Co.	6:48a/4:47p	10:07a/7:58p
Moon 10:02a/7:54p 10:01a/7:53p 10:07a/7:58p		
Dec. 8	Dec. 15	Dec. 30

Almanac

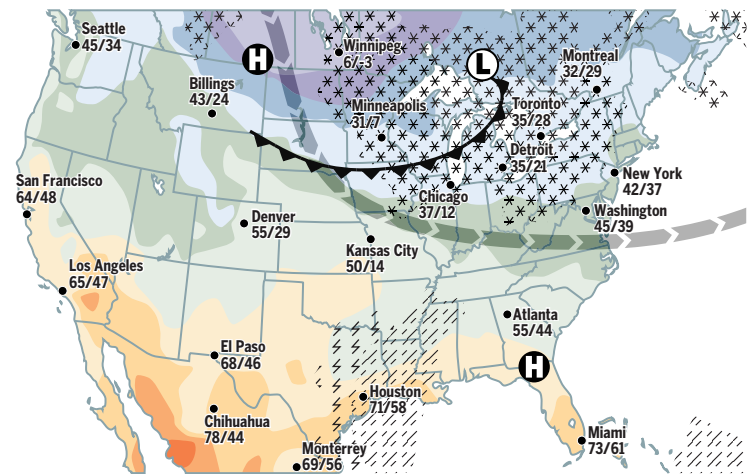
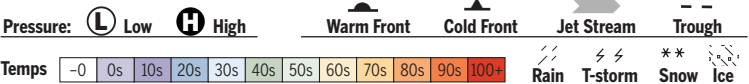
Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	70/47	68/48	64/45
Normal high/low	69/49	69/47	68/46
High/low a year ago	69/49	71/47	66/50
Record high/date	89/1958	79/2007	96/1958
Record low/date	36/1897	36/2010	37/1967

Precipitation	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	0.14	0.02	0.44
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	0.36	0.41	0.30
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	1.51	1.37	2.01
Humidity (high/low)	89/59	86/50	96/69

City	Tue.*			Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo		Hi	Lo	
San Diego	67	51	--	65	47	66	46		
San Francisco	63	47	--	64	48	63	48		
San Gabriel	68	48	--	67	47	72	54		
San Jose	71	45	--	71	45	70	46		
San Luis Obispo	67	41	--	70	44	75	47		
Santa Ana	66	52	--	65	48	67	50		
Santa Barbara	60	43	--	63	44	65	47		
Santa Clarita	73	45	--	77	47	77	51		
Santa Monica Pier	64	48	--	61	46	63	51		
Santa Paula	66	44	--	70	46	76	53		
Santa Rosa	68	40	--	66	41	65	42		
Simi Valley	70	44	--	72	47	76	51		
Tahoe Valley	50	22	--	49	21	50	20		
Temecula	71	36	--	74	38	78	43		
Thousand Oaks	68	42	--	68	44	75	52		
Torrance	64	52	--	62	49	62	51		
UCLA	64	47	--	62	46	68	50		
Van Nuys	73	45	--	71	48	78	57		
Ventura	58	45	--	60	47	61	51		
Whittier Hills	67	49	--	66	46	70	51		
Woodland Hills	72	44	--	69	46	76	53		
Wrightwood	55	39	--	56	37	58	33		
Yorba Linda	70	44	--	67	41	72	43		
Yosemite Valley	58	35	--	64	32	61	27		

Today in North America

New surge of cold air: Winds will increase across the upper Midwest as a fresh surge of cold air and snow showers moves in with a front. Snow showers and squalls will also push eastward late in the afternoon and at night. Rain and thunder will expand northeastward from East Texas.



U.S. cities

TUESDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 83 in Palm Springs, Calif.					Low -13 in Gunnison, Colo.				
City	Tuesday*	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Sky
Albany	34	17	.01		35	31	Sf		
Albuquerque	56	32	--		59	34	Su		
Anchorage	31	19	.02		39	30	Sh		
Aspen	40	10	--		41	16	Su		
Atlanta	44	31	--		55	44	Su		
Austin	64	40	.01		61	55	Ts		
Baltimore	43	26	--		44	37	W		
Boise	38	22	--		44	27	Su		
Boston	38	28	--		40	36	Pc		
Buffalo	36	27	.01		34	28	Sn		
Burlington, Vt.	33	30	.05		34	32	Sn		
Charleston, S.C.	48	32	--		55	41	Su		
Charlotte	43	27	Tr		52	40	Pc		
Chicago	31	19	--		37	12	Sf		
Cincinnati	29	20	.01		42	15	Cy		
Cleveland	33	23	Tr		37	24	Sf		
Columbia, S.C.	46	30	--		54	41	Su		
Columbus	33	19	Tr		40	18	Sf		
Dallas/Ft.Worth	61	36	--		55	45	Ts		
Denver	64	33	--		57	29	Su		
Detroit	35	21	--		35	21	Sf		
El Paso	63	45	--		68	46	Pc		
Eugene	39	31	Tr		43	32	Fg		
Fort Myers	69	46	--		73	50	Su		
Hartford	41	22	Tr		41	34	Pc		
Honolulu	83	68	--		83	70	Pc		
Houston	67	43	.04		71	58	R		
Indianapolis	26	15	Tr		41	11	W		
Jacksonville, Fla.	57	32	--		62	38	Su		
Kansas City	37	15	--		50	14	Su		
Knoxville	35	29	Tr		51	37	Pc		
Las Vegas	66	47	--		68	45	Su		
Louisville	30	25	Tr		48	18	Cy		
Medford	43	27	--		44	33	Fg		
Memphis	42	26	--		52	33	Pc		
Miami	72	57	--		73	61	Su		
Milwaukee	34	27	--		37	15	Sf		
Minneapolis	27	12	Tr		31	7	Sf		
Nashville	35	26	Tr		56	27	Cy		
New Orleans	58	41	--		68	61	Cy		
New York	41	33	Tr		42	37	Pc		
Norfolk	43	34	--		48	41	Pc		
Oklahoma City	54	26	--		62	32	Cy		
Omaha	40	17	--		43	9	W		
Orlando	63	43	--		69	46	Su		
Philadelphia	41	31	Tr		42	38	W		
Phoenix	83	55	--		77	52	Pc		
Pittsburgh	35	22	Tr		37	20	Sf		
Portland, Ore.	49	28	--		49	34	Pc		
Providence	36	22	Tr		41	37	Pc		
Raleigh/Durham	44	29	--		50	41	Pc		
Reno	53	22	--		53	26	Su		
Richmond	44	25	--		47	39	Cy		
St. Louis	36	24	Tr		52	15	Su		
Salt Lake City	46	29	--		45	28	Su		

World									
Acapulco	87	72	--		87	71	Pc		
Amsterdam	46	42	.31		45	39	Sh		
Athens	60	52	.02		60	53	Su		
Bangkok	--	91	77	--	93	77	Pc		
Barcelona	61	48	10		61	42	Su		
Berlin	46	39	.28		42	37	R		
Cabo San Lucas	90	62	--		86	59	Hz		
Cairo	72	55	--		71	56	Su		
Dubai	82	66	--		83	67	Su		
Dublin	46	27	.16		55	49	Sh		
Havana	75	68	--		78	57	Pc		
Ho Chi Minh City	82	77	.20		88	77	Pc		
Hong Kong	74	63	--		75	63	Su		
Istanbul	54	50	.20		52	47	Cy		
Jerusalem	61	42	--		62	45	Su		
Johannesburg	90	55	--		93	68	Su		
Kuala Lumpur	88	76	.40		86	75	Ts		
Lima	79	64	--		74	64	Cy		
London	46	41	.02		49	47	Pc		
Madrid	61	39	.04		61	37	Pc		
Mecca	87	66	--		87	65	Cy		
Mexico City	72	46	--		73	46	Cy		
Montreal	32	25	.04		32	29	Sn		
Moscow	34	30	.27		33	18	Cy		
Mumbai	90	76	--		93	77	Hz		
New Delhi	79	55	--		77	51	Su		
Paris	46	41	.07		46	40	Cy		
Prague	41	32	.26		37	31	Cy		
Rome	57	37	.20		58	48	Sh		
Seoul	39	24	Tr		43	25	Pc		
Singapore	88	78	.53		90	78	Ts		
Taipei City	--	81	72	--	73	63	Su		
Tokyo	64	48	.01		64	50	Cy		
Vancouver	45	30	--		45	36	Cy		
Vienna	40	30	.02		43	32	Cy		

Key: Su sunny; Pc partly cloudy; Cy cloudy; Fg foggy; Precp precipitation; Dr drizzle; HZ hazy Sh showers; Ts thunderstorms; R rain; Sn snow; Sf snow flurries; I ice; Rs rain/snow; W windy; Tr trace. **Notes:** National extremes exclude Alaska and Hawaii. * - data estimated.

Tuesday's readings as of 2 p.m.

Lakers reach a new low for the LeBron era

Their 80 points in loss at Minnesota are their fewest since James joined team in 2018.

By Dan Woike

MINNEAPOLIS — LeBron James shrugged. He rolled his eyes. He complained to the referees. He hung his head.

There was no discretion Monday in Minnesota — everything you needed to know about the Lakers and their leading scorer was on display in big, bold letters.

“It’s everything,” James said. “It’s the rhythm. I just feel off rhythm these last three, four games.”

Playing on the second night of back-to-back games, James looked as uncomfortable as ever in a Lakers uniform as he and his team failed over and over at the game’s simplest task — putting the ball in the basket.

Minnesota beat the Lakers 109-80, their fifth loss in their last seven games. James has gone four straight games without making a three-pointer, and the Lakers’ offense has failed to score 110 points or more in five of its last six games.

The 80 points represent the Lakers’ worst offensive game in James’ time with the team and the worst for the organization since Jan. 22, 2017.

Fellow star Anthony Davis called the game “disgusting.”

For James, it’s been a miserable stretch of offensive basketball, particularly from the perimeter where he’s now missed 19 consecutive threes. He’s also been re-



D'ANGELO RUSSELL reacts after being called for a foul during the first half of Monday's loss at Minnesota, where the Lakers have won just twice since 2015-16.

markably careless with the ball, turning it over six times Monday, including one pass that perfectly split D'Angelo Russell and Gabe Vincent on a fast break, neither player close to keeping it from going into the seats. James has turned it over at least five times in 11 of the Lakers' 21 games.

Russell, who missed Sunday's ugly win in Utah, re-

turned from an illness and led the Lakers with 20 points.

Slightly less concerning than James' struggles is Davis' bad week. Monday, he scored only 12 points, a season low.

After opening the season scoring 20 or more in each of his first 14 games, he's been held to fewer than 20 in four of the last six games.

talked to, and that's our main seven or eight guys, they all feel the same way I do, which is the best version of us is when we have body and ball movement. I think we've seen that be a fact," Redick said. "I think they all agree with that. I've had conversations with them, they've all agreed with that. And I think if you look at the quarters, games where we've stalled out, we haven't had that."

The Lakers (12-9) didn't move much as they trudged through another loss in Minnesota, where they've won only twice since the 2015-16 season.

"I feel like the offense was fun. ... I really believe we've gotten better defensively. And I think we've spent a lot of time as a staff defensively," Redick said. "And this is the nature of the NBA season. You don't have a ton of time. The things you emphasize, hopefully you get better at. And sometimes when you don't emphasize something, or you don't work on something because you don't necessarily have time, or you think you're good at it and you think you have buy-in at it, you just get slippage. We gotta clean that up."

And they're going to need James to do it.

"Work," James said when asked about the solution. "Just work. That's all."

Vanderbilt's return is delayed

Jarred Vanderbilt, a forward who could answer some of the team's defense and rebounding problems, is dealing with a knee issue that will push his targeted season debut into 2025.

Vanderbilt, 25, had off-

MONDAY'S LATE BOX												
T'WOLVES 109, LAKERS 80												
LAKERS												
	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T					
Hachimura.....	29	4-5	2-2	1-4	2	2	10					
L.James.....	30	4-16	2-4	3-8	4	1	10					
Davis.....	32	4-14	4-4	2-11	5	3	12					
Knecht.....	27	3-8	0-2	0-3	0	1	6					
Russell.....	33	8-12	0-0	1-3	5	2	20					
Vincent.....	22	2-5	0-0	0-1	0	2	5					
Christie.....	21	2-9	0-0	0-2	1	0	5					
Traore.....	15	2-4	0-0	1-3	0	3	4					
Reddish.....	11	0-1	2-2	0-1	0	1	2					
Koloko.....	7	1-2	0-0	0-2	0	1	2					
Lewis.....	7	2-3	0-0	1-1	2	0	4					
Totals	32-79	10-14	9-39	19	16	80						
Shooting: Field goals, 40.5%; free throws, 71.4%												
Three-point goals: 6-31 (Russell 4-5, Vincent 1-4, Christie 1-7, Hachimura 0-1, Koloko 0-1, Reddish 0-1, Traore 0-1, Davis 0-2, L.James 0-4, Knecht 0-5), Team												
Rebounds: 8. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 2 (Davis, Traore). Turnovers: 20 (L.James 6, Russell 3, Christie 2, Davis 2, Hachimura 2, Traore 2, Knecht, Koloko, Lewis). Steals: 8 (Hachimura 2, Vincent 2, Lewis, Reddish, Russell, Traore). Technical Fouls: None.												
MINNESOTA												
	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T					
McDaniels.....	22	1-3	0-0	0-2	0	0	3					
Randle.....	24	6-13	4-4	1-5	3	3	18					
Gobert.....	32	7-8	3-4	6-12	0	3	17					
Conley.....	22	3-7	0-0	0-3	6	1	9					
A.Edwards.....	26	3-13	1-2	0-7	3	1	8					
DiVincenzo.....	28	4-8	0-0	0-5	9	1	11					
Reid.....	27	6-11	1-1	0-2	2	3	15					
Alexander-Walker.....	25	6-11	1-2	0-0	4	2	15					
Minott.....	7	1-2	0-0	0-2	1	1	2					
Garza.....	6	2-2	2-2	0-0	0	1	6					
Dozier.....	5	0-0	0-0	0-2	1	1	0					
Shannon Jr.....	5	2-3	0-0	0-1	0	0	5					
Nix.....	4	0-0	0-0	0-2	2	0	0					
Totals	41-81	12-15	7-43	31	17	109						
Shooting: Field goals, 50.6%; free throws, 80.0%												
Three-point goals: 15-35 (Conley 3-6, DiVincenzo 3-6, Randle 2-3, Reid 2-5, Alexander-Walker 2-6, Shannon Jr. 1-1, McDaniels 1-2, A.Edwards 1-5, Minott 0-1). Team Rebounds: 4. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 2 (McDaniels, Reid). Turnovers: 15 (A.Edwards 3, Conley 2, Gobert 2, McDaniels 2, Nix 2, Alexander-Walker, Dozier, Randle, Shannon Jr.). Steals: 11 (A.Edwards 2, DiVincenzo 2, Randle 2, Reid 2, Gobert, McDaniels, Minott). Technical Fouls: None.												
LAKERS												
Minnesota	20	24	20	16	80							
A-18,978. T-2:03.	22	24	23	23	109							

Team does have time to look for some answers

[Lakers, from B10] night when Timberwolves star Anthony Edwards scored only eight points — James called the offense “nasty.” Anthony Davis said it was “disgusting.”

And on the whole, the offense has been the thing that has mostly worked for this team through 21 games.

The energy inside the Lakers' locker room at the moment isn't particularly good, and that too can be expected after losing five of seven games.

But let's not ignore some obvious warning signs indicating that the Lakers could find themselves in some real trouble.

Sign No. 1: James

After the Lakers beat Utah on Sunday night in an ugly game while missing close to half of their regular rotation, James spoke about their deliberate style late in the game, when they put the ball in his hands and let him hunt a mismatch with Utah second-year guard Keyonte George.

James had shot five for 14 from the field in the fourth quarter, hardly the kind of efficiency Redick has preached, but with Austin Reaves, D'Angelo Russell and others unavailable, it was a necessary evil.

And James kind of liked it.

After the game, he said that style of play felt more “normal” to him than the pace, space and movement offense the Lakers want to run. James referenced a career-low usage rate (it's actually his second-lowest behind his rookie season) as one of the biggest reasons he has needed to adjust.

If the Lakers are asking James to do less with the ball in his hands, it should have positive effects in other areas — fewer turnovers, better offensive efficiency, etc. Lately, it hasn't.

James is down to 34.5% from three-point range after four straight games without a make from long range. The slump, in fact, started sooner than that — coinciding with the Lakers' NBA Cup schedule. Since Nov. 15, James is shooting 21.8% from three. Maybe even more troubling, he's averaging a career-high 4.2 turnovers per game.

James has said he wants to play all 82 games, but even Redick acknowledged that might not be in the best interest of him or the team after he lumbered his way through Monday's loss.

It's fair to wonder if James' legs will allow him to play in the Lakers' motion-based offense while still allowing him to be fully



LAKERS GUARD Dalton Knecht is fouled by Minnesota Timberwolves guard Donte DiVincenzo in Monday night's game. Knecht said the team needs to get stops and get in transition to help its struggling offense.

engaged on the defensive end. James will pass Kareem-Abdul Jabbar for the most minutes played in NBA history sometime this month; he's 115 behind the Lakers legend.

And if the Lakers want to play a style that one of their best players doesn't want to play — or can't — well, that's an issue.

Sign No. 2: The defense

Do you know what's a bad sign for the Lakers? That the team has placed an increased emphasis on its awful defense over the last two weeks only to watch its offense crater.

The likelihood that the Lakers can be a good defensive team without it being something the coaches have to emphasize every night is not great. The team just doesn't have the kind of necessary defensive firepower to naturally smother opponents the way, say, Orlando or Oklahoma City or (the sure-to-be Lakers kryptonite) Houston can.

After the loss to Minnesota, Dalton Knecht was asked about the offensive woes and wisely pointed to the team needing to get stops and get in transition. But here's the thing: The Lakers have been getting stops over the last week, and they still can't put the ball in

the basket.

There have been encouraging signs — maybe the biggest being Rui Hachimura competing in a variety of matchups, including on Edwards, and consistent, confident defensive performances from Max Christie — but the issues are the issues.

The Lakers are small in the backcourt. They're bad in transition, in part, because Davis and James often are way behind plays after they attack the basket. And they lack real physical punch — a problem so severe the Lakers have given French bulldozer Arnel Traore a look in their last two games.

Sign No. 3: Their toughness

If there's a common denominator in the teams that have given the Lakers the most trouble, it's having physical perimeter defenders and big men not afraid to deliver some punishment around the rim.

Teams can overcome these deficiencies — they usually do it with shooting. But when they're at their best, the Lakers tend to bully smaller, less-physical teams.

So if the Lakers aren't physical enough to fight with the strongest and toughest, and that's their biggest strength, well, that

would limit the team's ceiling.

Again, there have been gains in this area with the Lakers making it a priority, but it has come at some cost on the offensive end. Most people who know the Lakers know they're not the physically toughest. And, if we look at what has happened in the last week or so, their mental toughness can be questioned.

They coughed up the game to Orlando because of missed free throws — certainly a mental lapse. They collapsed in the second half when things got tough against Denver, a sign that the Nuggets have a significant mental edge. They were blown out in Phoenix, failed to execute late against Oklahoma City and couldn't avoid being overcome with frustration at Minnesota.

After the Lakers “stopped playing” in the second half against Denver, Redick wrote it off as an isolated moment. In a giant red flag Monday, Redick said maybe he was wrong.

“I said that that was an aberration. I said that to the group. I said that to you guys,” he told the media after losing to Minnesota. “It's looking more and more like it's not an aberration.”

Sign No. 4: No way out

So what is there to do?

Bad news for Lakers fans hungry for the team to act fast — the issues that always have existed for the Lakers and the trade market still exist for them on the trade market.

Pieces this early in the season are high for any player who would make an obvious difference, and the Lakers don't have the players or the draft picks to make an overpay. That was true last year; it's true today.

The team's needs — size, two-way players, shooting — also could be described as “a whole bunch of stuff,” which presents its own problems when it comes to cost-benefit analysis of putting assets into play.

If there's hope, it comes from the fact that although everything written above is true, the Lakers still are above .500, still capable of beating almost anyone and still a team getting comfortable with new offensive and defensive identities.

There's probably no easy fix, which would be real reason to panic if the Lakers were more than halfway through the season. But it's still relatively early and maybe the answers can come from within — at least one or two of them.



CRAIG WESTON For The Times

CORONA Centennial quarterback Husan Longstreet will be the centerpiece of the Trojans' recruiting class.

Out-of-state exodus takes a toll

USC has had players decommit, but plenty of big-name recruits are still available.

By RYAN KARTJE

The exodus that has defined this cycle for USC started almost six months ahead of Wednesday's early signing day, just as USC's recruiting efforts were rolling and its 2025 class had climbed into the top five.

Lincoln Riley and his USC staff had set out over the last year to stake their claim outside the bounds of Southern California, an approach far removed from that of his predecessors. Heading into the summer, the Trojans' out-of-state pursuits appeared to be humming along. Three five-star prospects, all from the state of Georgia, had committed to play at USC. A flood of other commits from the Southeast followed.

The Trojans looked, as of early June, to be headed in an elite direction on the recruiting trail, marching toward the sort of rarefied air that recently had eluded Riley. Then, the two crown jewels of that group — defensive linemen Justus Terry and Isaiah Gibson, each top-10 prospects from the Peach State — pulled their commitments. Over the course of 24 hours, the challenges of keeping such a far-reaching class intact had become painfully clear.

Since June, USC has lost 10 commitments from its class, nine of whom were out-of-state prospects and

five of whom were ranked in the top 100. In total, 13 commits turned away from their pledge to the Trojans during this recruiting cycle, among the most of any program in the country.

According to the 247 Sports site's rankings, USC's group of decommitments actually would outrank its current class, which sits in 16th place nationally.

That's not to suggest USC, fresh off its frustrating 6-6 finish to the season, is stumbling its way into the early signing window. The top quarterback in the state, Corona Centennial five-star Husan Longstreet, will be the centerpiece of a class that also includes two top-150 offensive tackles and could add two top-50 defenders this week.

That presumably will be enough for its class to finish fourth or fifth in the Big Ten. But even as USC aims to finish strong Wednesday, it's hard not to wonder what might have been with a different approach.

"The strategy works if you can hold on to them," said Brandon Huffman, the national recruiting editor for 247 Sports. "But if it starts to backfire and you start to lose those players to programs in their own regional footprint, it makes you wonder if this is the right and the most sound strategy. You're beating the heavyweights to get them. But now you have to hold those heavyweights off."

It also has meant paying less attention to the best prospects in your own backyard. Ahead of signing day, USC had just one commit (Longstreet) ranked

among the top 12 prospects in the state. Another — JSerra linebacker Madden Faraimo, the sixth-ranked player in the state and No. 61 overall player in the class — was rumored this week to be trending toward the Trojans.

Even if Faraimo signs, it won't change the fact that other programs have far outperformed USC in its own territory. Alabama has three commits ranked in the top seven in California, and Texas A&M and Penn State would have the same number of top-12 signees in the state as USC.

Meanwhile, 15% of USC's offers in the 2025 cycle went east to the state of Georgia, where Georgia coach Kirby Smart successfully stiff-armed Riley and his staff, securing commitments from six of the top seven recruits in the state.

The Big Ten's other powers also are primed to lock down their own state's top prospects on signing day. Michigan has three of the top five commits in its home state, and Ohio State has three of the top five in Ohio.

Last month, as coaches whispered about USC's absence in the region, Riley assured anyone who would listen that the state was "priority No. 1."

"That's not going to change," Riley said.

Outside of Faraimo, though, the one prospect most capable of altering the outlook of USC's class on signing day is a defensive lineman from Louisiana.

Jahkeem Stewart is the type of freakish five-star talent who could totally transform a defense. He's also

likely to cost seven figures per year as part of a massive name, image and likeness package. But the 17-year-old from Edna Karr High in New Orleans has played just 12 varsity football games and hasn't played since reclassifying from the 2026 recruiting class.

"His upside makes him a kind of unicorn," Huffman said. "But he just doesn't have the reps."

Stewart will choose between Louisiana State, Ohio State, Oregon and USC, but none is as desperate for his services as USC. He would give the Trojans a marquee signing along the defensive front, where they have zero edge rushers committed and just three defensive linemen, none of whom are ranked in the top 250.

"They're always, you could argue, one of the toughest, if not the toughest position to recruit," Riley said.

"Because there's not many great ones, and they're typically in high demand."

Demands have shifted significantly over the course of this particular recruiting cycle, with an earlier signing period and revenue-sharing on the horizon.

That has made for more volatility than usual, said Riley, whose own class has been particularly unwieldy.

"You're seeing it happen all over the country," Riley said.

"We're going to stay steady, stay the course."

"We know the kind of people and players we want to bring in here, and that's what we're going to keep doing."

prospect with him to UCLA as part of Martin's expected return to the school as an assistant coach working with the secondary.

UCLA also is expected to be the leader for Lucien Holland after the three-star edge rusher from Inglewood High decommitted from Boise State this week.

Biggins listed Sitanilei, Cogshell and Cox as candidates to play as freshmen. Harden's presumed departure means there should be plenty of carries available for the running backs, including Cox.

"He's a tough kid, runs well, super instinctive and a natural athlete," Biggins said of Cox. "He's kind of what you call a box-checker — he checks everything you want to see in a running back."

Foster has said he wanted to get UCLA's high school recruiting rolling like it was back when he played for the Bruins and they vied for the top class in the nation every year. UCLA's 2026 class, which includes four players in its infancy, is ranked No. 14 nationally by 247Sports.

"Once we can get some more talent, we have a chance to be top-five," said Foster, who has emphasized the need to keep the best California players home instead of losing them to other schools in the Big Ten and Southeastern conferences. "We want to show how recruiting is gonna go around here in the future."

Jabari said he's part of a text group chat with several fellow recruits in the 2025 class, everyone eager to help Foster and the Bruins build on winning four of their last six games this season.

"Every time after a big win," Jabari said, "we go in the group chat and get hyped."

THE DAY IN SPORTS

U.S. is a winner in Naeher's last match

WIRE REPORTS

Alyssa Naeher ended her national team career with one last win.

The stalwart goalkeeper made two critical saves in her final match for the United States, and the Americans beat the Netherlands 2-1 on Tuesday.

Lynn Williams scored the go-ahead goal in the 71st minute for the U.S., which won its fifth Olympic gold medal in France this summer and wrapped up the year on a 20-game unbeaten streak.

Naeher announced two weeks ago that the European exhibitions would be her final matches. The 36-year-old goalkeeper played in 115 games for the U.S., with 111 starts, 89 wins and 69 shut-outs. She's the only U.S. keeper with shutouts in both a World Cup and an Olympic final. She was in goal when the U.S. defeated the Netherlands 2-0 in the 2019 Women's World Cup final.

"I feel like in my heart I would love to keep going. In my head, in my body and mind, I feel like it's the right time," Naeher said. "And I think it's the right time with this team as well as it builds towards the future and towards 2027. This environment, this team is an incredible team to be a part of, but it's also really hard and really challenging in a lot of ways as well. I feel like I've given everything I have to give for this team and that's why I feel at peace with that."

The U.S. is unbeaten in 15 matches under coach **Emma Hayes**, who took over in May.

Southland native **Nick Rimando**, who starred at UCLA and had a 20-year MLS career, was elected to the U.S. National Soccer Hall of Fame with former Galaxy player **Chris Armas** and U.S. women's stars **Carli Lloyd** and **Mary Harvey**. They'll be inducted May 3.

ETC.

Alabama's hopes up, Miami down

Miami's playoff hopes took a potentially fatal nosedive while Alabama's got a boost in the last rankings before the 12-team College Football Playoff bracket is set next weekend.

The Hurricanes (10-2) moved down six spots to No. 12, the first team out of the projected bracket after suffering their second loss. They are one spot behind the Crimson Tide (9-3), who won last week and moved up two spots to No. 11, where they are projected as the last team in. Oregon stayed at No. 1 for the fifth straight week and will head into Saturday's Big Ten title game as the only undefeated team.

Michigan fired offensive coordinator **Kirk Campbell**, three days after the Wolverines closed the regular season with a 13-10 upset win over Ohio State. ... San José State is headed back to the Hawaii Bowl for a second straight season to face South Florida.

Houston Texans linebacker **Azeez Al-Shaair** was suspended for three games for repeated violations of player safety rules following his violent hit to the head of Jacksonville's **Trevor Lawrence**, which led to a concussion. Al-Shaair is appealing the suspension, the Associated Press reported. ... Prolific receiver **Sterling**

NFL STANDINGS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE						
West	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Seattle	7	5	0	.583	272	265
Arizona	6	6	0	.500	266	259
RAMS	6	6	0	.500	254	290
San Francisco	5	7	0	.417	270	295
North	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Detroit	11	1	0	.917	383	203
Minnesota	10	2	0	.833	297	219
Green Bay	9	3	0	.750	318	240
Chicago	4	8	0	.333	241	240
South	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Atlanta	6	6	0	.500	257	291
Tampa Bay	6	6	0	.500	335	296
New Orleans	4	8	0	.333	276	281
Carolina	3	9	0	.250	217	366
East	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Philadelphia	10	2	0	.833	320	218
Washington	8	5	0	.615	376	296
Dallas	5	7	0	.417	248	339
e-N.Y. Giants	2	10	0	.167	183	279

AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
West	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
x-Kansas City	11	1	0	.917	289	235
CHARGERS	8	4	0	.667	260	188
Denver	8	5	0	.615	305	234
e-Las Vegas	2	10	0	.167	223	333
North	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	9	3	0	.750	296	224
Baltimore	8	5	0	.615	383	318
Cincinnati	4	8	0	.333	335	340
Cleveland	3	9	0	.250	218	308
South	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Houston	8	5	0	.615	308	288
Indianapolis	6	7	0	.462	267	296
Tennessee	3	9	0	.250	221	332
Jacksonville	2	10	0	.167	228	339
East	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
y-Buffalo	10	2	0	.833	355	224
Miami	5	7	0	.417	232	266
N.Y. Jets	3	9	0	.250	225	268
e-New England	3	10	0	.231	221	307

y-clinched division
x-clinched playoff spot
e-eliminated from playoff contention

THURSDAY'S RESULTS

Detroit 23, Chicago 20
Dallas 27, N.Y. Giants 20
Green Bay 30, Miami 17

FRIDAY'S RESULT

Kansas City 19, Las Vegas 17

SUNDAY'S RESULTS

RAMS 21, New Orleans 14
CHARGERS 17, Atlanta 13
Houston 23, Jacksonville 20
Indianapolis 25, New England 24
Minnesota 23, Arizona 22
Pittsburgh 44, Cincinnati 38
Seattle 26, N.Y. Jets 21
Washington 42, Tennessee 19
Philadelphia 24, Baltimore 19
Tampa Bay 26, Carolina 23
Buffalo 35, San Francisco 10

MONDAY'S RESULT

Denver 41, Cleveland 32

THURSDAY'S GAME

Green Bay at Detroit, 5:15 p.m.

SUNDAY'S GAMES

Buffalo at RAMS, 1:25 p.m.
CHARGERS at Kansas City, 5:20 p.m.
Atlanta at Minnesota, 10 a.m.
Carolina at Philadelphia, 10 a.m.
Cleveland at Pittsburgh, 10 a.m.
Jacksonville at Tennessee, 10 a.m.
Las Vegas at Tampa Bay, 10 a.m.
N.Y. Jets at Miami, 10 a.m.
New Orleans at N.Y. Giants, 10 a.m.
Seattle at Arizona, 1:05 p.m.
Chicago at San Francisco, 1:25 p.m.
Open: Baltimore, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, New England, Washington

MONDAY'S GAME

Cincinnati at Dallas, 5:15 p.m.

Sharpe and Super Bowl-winning coach **Mike Holmgren** advanced to the final stage of voting for the 2025 Pro Football Hall of Fame class. ... In Monday night's game, **Ja'Quan McMillian** returned an interception 44 yards for a game-sealing touchdown with 1:48 left, the second pick-six of the game committed by **Jameis Winston**, and Denver beat Cleveland 41-32. Winston threw for a franchise-record 497 yards and four touchdowns and **Jerry Jeudy** had nine catches for 235 yards — the most in history by a receiver against his former team — and a touchdown.

The Boston Red Sox agreed with left-handed reliever **Aroldis Chapman** on a one-year contract worth \$10.75 million, AP reported. ... Catcher **Kyle Higashioka** signed a \$13.5-million, two-year contract with Texas.

Daniel Dubois will make his second heavyweight title defense against **Joseph Parker** on Feb. 22 in Saudi Arabia on the undercard of the rematch between light-heavyweight champion **Artur Beterbiev** and **Dmitry Bivol**.

Neale Fraser, who won three Grand Slam singles titles and guided Australia to four Davis Cup titles during a 24-year career as team captain, died at 91.

Ski great **Marcel Hirscher's** comeback season after five years away is over after the Austrian star tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee.

Bruins try to keep '25 class intact

At early signing day, UCLA's group of 2025 recruits ranked 35th in nation, 11th in Big Ten.

By BEN BOLCH

Kuron Jabari Jr. was the original believer.

Back in early March, before DeShaun Foster had concocted his first spring practice plan or devised a tentative depth chart, Jabari became the first high school prospect to give the new UCLA coach a verbal commitment.

The cornerback from Corona Centennial was drawn by a budding culture rooted in what Foster had done when he starred for the Bruins more than two decades earlier.

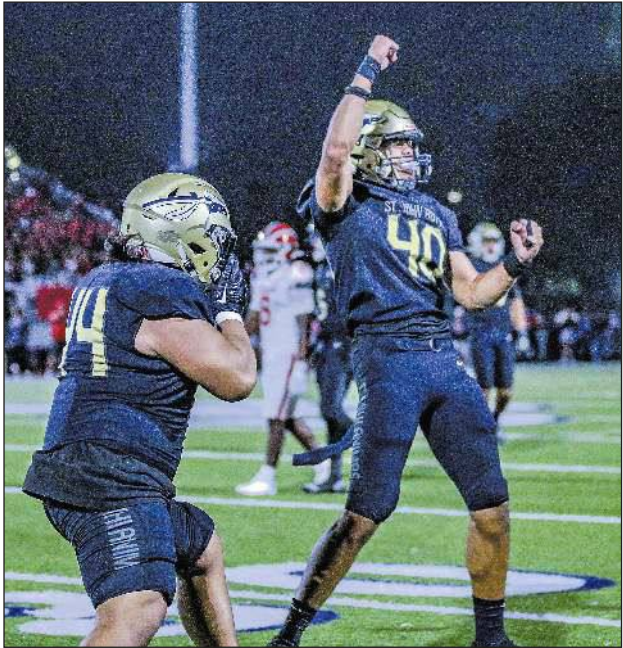
"He's a great," Jabari said last weekend while standing on the Rose Bowl sideline before UCLA's 20-13 victory over Fresno State, "so he knows what it takes to be great."

As the early signing period for high school players arrives Wednesday, Foster is about to get a much better sense of who else is with him.

The likely departures of running back T.J. Harden and quarterback Justyn Martin through the transfer portal after they were expected to be major contributors essentially planted a massive "Help wanted" sign outside the Bruins' practice facility.

While most replacements for the team's 14 departed starters (and counting) will come from the transfer portal and the current roster, a few also be could found in a recruiting class that Foster and his staff largely salvaged after their hiring in February.

If all goes well, the biggest



CRAIG WESTON For The Times

ST. JOHN BOSCO edge rusher Epi Sitanilei (40) was believed to be weighing UCLA and Ohio State.

save would come Wednesday.

Epi Sitanilei, a four-star edge rusher from St. John Bosco who is the highest-rated prospect among the 18 high school players verbally committed to UCLA, visited Ohio State last weekend and is believed to be strongly considering the Buckeyes.

Of course, Ohio State didn't help its cause by losing the rivalry game to Michigan and having a postgame melee break out on its home field.

"For UCLA, if he was going to go to a game, that was probably the game to go to," said Greg Biggins, a national recruiting analyst for 247Sports, "but I still think Ohio State is a tough place to say no to."

Keeping Sitanilei would preserve the headliner in a recruiting class that's heavy on edge rushers and includes a quartet of four-star prospects in Sitanilei,

quarterback Madden Iamaleava (Long Beach Poly), edge rusher Cole Cogshell (Muir) and running back Carson Cox (Oak Hills).

As currently constructed, the class is ranked No. 35 nationally by 247Sports and No. 11 among the 18 Big Ten teams.

"It doesn't have the star power at the top of the board that gets a lot of people excited, but it's got some quality depth at key positions, namely edge," Biggins said. "All the guys they got are pretty solid with some upside."

There could be two late additions to the class. LaRue Zamorano, a three-star cornerback from Corona Centennial, decommitted from Michigan State as part of a possible move to Westwood. Demetrice Martin, the Spartans defensive backs coach who was a big part of Zamorano's commitment, could bring the



PETER DEJONG Associated Press

ALYSSA NAEHER makes a save before teammate Emily Sonnett and Netherlands' Lineth Beerensteyn.



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

THE FIVE-YEAR deal left-hander Blake Snell signed with the Dodgers as a free agent is worth \$182 million.

Team flexes its financial muscle

[**Dodgers**, from B10] getting together and talking about ways we could put ourselves in the best position to win a World Series in 2025,” Friedman said, “all conversations kept coming back to Blake.”

A first-round draft pick of the Tampa Bay Rays in 2011 (back when Friedman was still running the Rays’ front office), Snell burst onto the scene in his third MLB season in 2018, when he won his first Cy Young Award with an AL-leading 21 wins and 1.89 ERA.

He played a key role in the Rays’ run to the 2020 World Series too, following up a 4-2 record and 3.24 ERA in the pandemic-shortened regular season with a 3.03 ERA over six postseason starts — the last of which came in Game 6 of that year’s Fall Classic, when Snell was infamously removed early by Rays manager Kevin Cash in the Dodgers’ come-from-behind, title-clinching win.

The knocks against Snell over the years have revolved around his durability and consistency.

The Seattle native had ERAs above 4.00 in 2019 (when he missed time to have loose bodies removed from his elbow) and 2021 (after being traded to the San Diego Padres).

He missed more time in 2022 because of an adductor injury, before returning to form late in the year to help the Padres get past the Dodgers in the National League Division Series (he was the victorious pitcher in a pivotal Game 3 of that series).

And even though he claimed the Cy Young again in 2023, going 14-9 with a 2.25 ERA to become just the seventh pitcher in history to win the award in both leagues, his market as a free agent last winter never developed as he hoped, forcing him to settle for a two-year, \$62-million deal with the San Francisco Giants shortly before opening day.

The Dodgers made a late play for Snell in the spring but failed to top their division rival’s bid.

Now, however, he has arrived in Los Angeles looking like a missing piece in the Dodgers’ repeat plans, helping nullify the one significant limitation the team faced as it rode a patchwork pitching staff to a World Series.

Despite a bumpy start to 2024 that was affected by his late signing and abnormal preseason, Snell reaffirmed



ASHLEY LANDIS Associated Press

IPPEI MIZUHARA, left, former interpreter for Shohei Ohtani, right, is set to be sentenced Jan. 24 in federal court after pleading guilty to bank and tax fraud.

Ohtani to get his baseball cards

Former interpreter is alleged to have spent \$325,000 of Dodgers star’s money on items.

BY STEVE HENSON

Ippei Mizuhara’s fleeing of Shohei Ohtani was straightforward for the most part. Ohtani’s former interpreter and presumed friend had access to a bank account full of Ohtani’s money, and he simply wrote checks and withdrew cash whenever he made bets or needed to pay gambling debts.

Mizuhara pleaded guilty to bank and tax fraud in June and was ordered to pay full restitution to his victims, which includes \$16,975,010 to Ohtani, and \$1,149,400 to the IRS. He is scheduled to be sentenced Jan. 24 in federal court.

But apparently Mizuhara found other ways to steal from Ohtani while the two-way baseball star played for

the Angels and after he signed with the Dodgers in December 2023. On one occasion Mizuhara needed \$60,000 worth of dental work, and Ohtani approved payment from a business account, according to prosecutors. Mizuhara, however, deposited the money into his personal bank account and paid the dentist from the Ohtani account he illegally controlled.

And shortly after Ohtani signed with the Dodgers, Mizuhara purchased \$325,000 worth of baseball cards that he apparently hoped would increase in value now that his boss was wearing blue. Some of the collectible cards were signed and Mizuhara purchased them from online resellers EBay and Whatnot, according to court documents.

The cards were seized from Mizuhara, and Ohtani had a hearing scheduled for Dec. 20 in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California to recover them.

his status as a front-line ace with a blistering finish to the year, going 5-0 with an MLB-best 1.23 ERA after returning from a groin strain in early July.

And though he has still surpassed 130 innings only twice in his career (he eclipsed 180 frames in both of his Cy Young seasons), he probably won’t be asked to shoulder a burdensome workload with the Dodgers, who will probably deploy a six-man

rotation next year as Shohei Ohtani, Tyler Glasnow, Dustin May, Tony Gonsolin and Clayton Kershaw (who still intends to re-sign in Los Angeles) all return from injuries.

What Snell does give the Dodgers is even more valuable: another high-caliber weapon to rely upon in a potential postseason rotation. More proven insurance in case their pitching staff is ravaged by injuries again.

The hearing is no longer necessary because prosecutors said in a court filing Monday that the cards would be given to Ohtani when Mizuhara is sentenced.

“Ohtani holds a valid pre-existing interest in Forfeitable Property as title to the Forfeitable Property was vested in Ohtani at the time of the commission of the acts which give rise to the forfeiture,” the government wrote in the filing.

Mizuhara’s “insatiable appetite for illegal sports betting,” as federal prosecutor E. Martin Estrada described it, will result in a lengthy prison sentence and almost certain deportation to Japan, Mizuhara’s country of birth.

Mizuhara pretended to be Ohtani in calls from his phone to bank employees about the wire transfers, according to a 36-page complaint filed in April, and used biographical details from Ohtani’s life to pass security challenges.

And another signal that, even after committing close to \$1.5 billion in signings last offseason and carrying a \$350-million payroll (for competitive balance tax purposes) this past season, they possess the resources needed to keep their championship window wide open.

“This is where you want to play,” Snell said. “I don’t think there’s a better situation than what you can be in right here.”

PRO CALENDAR

	WED 4	THU 5	FRI 6	SAT 7	SUN 8
RAMS					BUFFALO 1:25 Ch. 11
CHARGERS					at Kansas City 5:20 Ch. 4, Peacock
LAKERS	at Miami 4:30 SpecSN, NBA TV		at Atlanta 4:30 SpecSN, NBA TV		PORTLAND 6:30 SpecSN
CLIPPERS	MINNESOTA 7:30 Ch. 5, NBA TV				HOUSTON 6 FDSC
KINGS	DALLAS 7 TNT, Max			MINNESOTA 5 Ch. 9	
DUCKS	VEGAS 7 Ch. 13, Victory+		MINNESOTA 7 Ch. 13, Victory+		
GALAXY				NEW YORK# 1 Ch. 11, Apple TV+	

Shade denotes home game #MLS Cup

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
BASKETBALL		
4:30 p.m.	Lakers at Miami	TV: SpecSN, NBA R: 710, 1330
7:30 p.m.	Minnesota at Clippers	TV: 5, NBA R: 570, 1330

COLLEGE BASKETBALL: MEN		
3:30 p.m.	Baylor at Connecticut	TV: FS1
3:30 p.m.	Florida Atlantic at Florida International	TV: CBSSN
3:30 p.m.	Ohio State at Maryland	TV: Big Ten
4:15 p.m.	Alabama at North Carolina	TV: ESPN
4:15 p.m.	Virginia at Florida	TV: ESPN2
5:30 p.m.	Kansas at Creighton	TV: FS1
5:30 p.m.	Michigan State at Minnesota	TV: Big Ten
5:30 p.m.	New Jersey Institute of Technology at Seton Hall	TV: CBSSN
6 p.m.	Life Pacific at Pepperdine	TV: ESPN+
6:15 p.m.	Auburn at Duke	TV: ESPN
6:15 p.m.	Pittsburgh at Mississippi State	TV: SEC
6:15 p.m.	Texas at North Carolina State	TV: ESPN2
6:15 p.m.	DePaul at Texas Tech	TV: ESPN
6:15 p.m.	Vanderbilt at Virginia Tech	TV: ACC
7:30 p.m.	Oregon at USC	TV: Big Ten
7:30 p.m.	San Diego State at Fresno State	TV: FS1

COLLEGE BASKETBALL: WOMEN		
2 p.m.	Oklahoma at Louisville	TV: ESPN2
2 p.m.	Vanderbilt at Miami	TV: ACC
2 p.m.	Virginia Tech at Georgia	TV: SEC
4:15 p.m.	Syracuse at Texas A&M	TV: ESPN
4:15 p.m.	Florida State at Tennessee	TV: SEC
4:15 p.m.	Mississippi State at Georgia Tech	TV: ACC
6 p.m.	Life Pacific at Loyola Marymount	TV: ESPN+

GOLF		
1 a.m. (Thurs.)	World Tour, Nedbank Golf Challenge, first round	TV: Golf
6:30 a.m. (Thurs.)	Asian Tour, Saudi International, second round	TV: Golf

HOCKEY: AHL		
4 p.m.	Rockford at Lehigh Valley	TV: NHL

HOCKEY: NHL		
4:30 p.m.	Boston at Chicago	TV: TNT, Max
7 p.m.	Dallas at Kings	TV: TNT, Max R: ESPNLA stream
7 p.m.	Vegas at Ducks	TV: 13, Victory+ R: Ducks stream

SOCCER		
9 a.m.	German Cup, Cologne vs. Hertha	TV: ESPN+
9 a.m.	German Cup, Wolfsburg vs. Hoffenheim	TV: ESPN+
11:30 a.m.	England, Southampton vs. Chelsea	TV: Peacock
11:30 a.m.	England, Newcastle vs. Liverpool	TV: Peacock
11:30 a.m.	England, Manchester City vs. Nottingham Forest	TV: Peacock
11:30 a.m.	England, Everton vs. Wolverhampton	TV: Peacock
11:45 a.m.	German Cup, Leipzig vs. Frankfurt	TV: ESPN+
11:45 a.m.	German Cup, Karlsruhe vs. Augsburg	TV: ESPN+
Noon	Coppa Italia, Fiorentina vs. Empoli	TV: Paramount+
Noon	Scotland, Aberdeen vs. Celtic	TV: CBSSN
Noon	Spain, Athletic Club vs. Real Madrid	TV: ESPN+, ESPND
12:15 p.m.	England, Aston vs. Brentford	TV: USA, Peacock
12:15 p.m.	England, Arsenal vs. Manchester United	TV: Peacock

TENNIS		
4 p.m.	The Garden Cup	TV: Tennis

SPORTS EXTRA

For late coverage of Rams, Chargers, Lakers and Clippers games and more, see our daily digital eNewspaper. Subscribers get free access to an exclusive “Sports Extra.” View it on your phone, tablet or computer at latimes.com/enewspaper.



Galaxy’s attack will look different without injured Puig in final

[**Galaxy**, from B10] coach Greg Vanney, who was guarded in how he might alter his lineup in Puig’s absence Saturday. When Puig was unavailable during the regular season, Vanney used Marco Reus and Diego Fagúndez in his place. But Reus is dealing with a nagging groin issue and Fagúndez hasn’t started a game or played more than 17 minutes in one since mid-September. Other options include Delgado and Gastón Brugman.

“It’s going to be a different type of player than Riqui,” Vanney said. “Marco, we’ll see how his health is as the week progresses. Diego gives us a little bit of the option that we saw before. I also look at the Red Bulls [and] see them as a little bit of a unique competitor because of their progress.”

“We’re working through, talking through the right personnel to try to approach the game.”

The Red Bulls, 11-14-9 in

the regular season, finished seventh in the Eastern Conference table but went on a run in the playoffs, sweeping the defending MLS champion Columbus Crew in the best-of-three first round, then shutting out New York City and Orlando City in elimination games to become the lowest-seeded team ever to reach the Cup final.

The Red Bulls, who won just two of their final 14 regular-season games dating to June 22, have given up only two goals in the postseason, with goalkeeper Carlos Coronel pitching three shutouts and making 19 saves.

The only team to finish the regular season with a losing record before winning the league title was Real Salt Lake (11-12-7), which beat the Galaxy on penalty kicks in 2009. The Red Bulls, an original MLS team, never have won the MLS Cup, losing the only final in which they played in 2008. That game

also was played in Carson.

Improving their chances in this one is the fact that the Galaxy won’t have Puig, who scored a career-high 13 goals and had a team-high 15 assists in the regular season, the 28 goal contributions in 29 games ranking 10th in MLS. He also led the league in touches and passes, making him the motor of the only team in MLS history to have four players finish with 10 or more goals.

And he was even better in the playoffs, scoring four goals and getting three assists, contributing to the scoring in all four Galaxy wins. Including playoffs, Puig has had a goal or assist in 12 of his last 15 MLS games dating to mid-July.

The Galaxy had a winning record in the five MLS games Puig missed this season, going 3-1-1, but the team averaged just 1.6 goals in those five games as opposed to 2.33 when Puig played.

Puig torn the ligament in

his left knee early in the second half of Saturday’s conference final on a non-contact play.

In the 60th minute, Seattle’s Cristian Roldan brought Puig down with a heavy tackle just outside the Sounders’ penalty area, drawing a yellow card and leaving Puig writhing on the ground and clutching his left knee. Puig eventually made his way to the Galaxy bench, where he was briefly attended to by trainer Cesar Roldan, Cristian’s brother.

But three minutes after the Roldan tackle, while racing Seattle’s Pedro de la Vega for a loose ball, Puig’s left leg gave way and he went down untouched. That was when the injury occurred although Puig played on, setting up Dejan Joveljic’s game-winning goal in the 85th minute.

“It was a pretty straightforward ACL tear,” Vanney said. “I think, given the moment, the adrenaline, the

competitor inside of him, I don’t know if he completely knew that.

“He felt like his knee was a little unstable, he felt some clicking. But he didn’t necessarily hear or feel like a pop, which sometimes is an indication. I actually didn’t even know that he had a knee issue.”

It was obvious Puig was ailing; late in the game, after planting on his left leg to take a shot, he limped away, flexing the knee. After the final whistle, the seriousness of the injury became apparent and a tearful Puig gestured to his parents to come out of the stands and join him on the field, where they tried to console him. Vanney also embraced and comforted Puig, who was then wearing a towel over his head.

“Emotionally, he’s devastated,” Vanney said. “This is what he came here for, to be in this game and to win a championship. That’s what

he’s been driven and motivated by.”

Vanney has some experience with devastating injuries. He was named to the U.S. World Cup team in 2002 but missed the tournament after being injured in one of the final warmup games.

“I understand a little bit the devastation that comes with it, and I hope to try to be a resource for him,” Vanney said. “But it’s going to be hard for him. I can already see that the messages he sent the group, so he’s there, and the group’s going to want to fight for him. Because he’s certainly helped us to get here.”

Puig, 25, an MLS All-Star, was named to the league’s postseason Best XI on Tuesday.

He emerged as one of the league’s most dynamic and influential players after the Galaxy paired him with speedy wingers Joseph Paintsil and Gabriel Pec this season.

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



Photographs by WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

THE DODGERS' newest starting pitcher, two-time Cy Young Award winner Blake Snell, said of the franchise: "This is where you want to play."

L.A.'s latest big-budget premiere

The deep-pocketed Dodgers introduce another elite ace in left-hander Snell

BY JACK HARRIS

In the right-field Stadium Club at Dodger Stadium on Tuesday afternoon, where dozens of media members gathered for yet another introductory news conference welcoming a star player to the organization, the Dodgers flexed their financial muscles with businesslike handshakes and celebratory smiles.

President of baseball operations Andrew Friedman and general manager Brandon Gomes sat beside their latest blockbuster acquisition, two-time Cy Young Award-winning pitcher Blake Snell, and his powerhouse



SNELL shakes hands with Dodgers executives Andrew Friedman, center, and Brandon Gomes at a news conference at Dodger Stadium.

agent, Scott Boras.

They watched the 31-year-old left-hander, signed last week to a five-year, \$182-million contract, slip into a white Dodgers jersey amid the flicker of cameras.

And, barely a month after winning the franchise's second World Series in the last five seasons (and first since 1988 that came in a full season and with a championship parade), they put the rest of the baseball world back on notice.

Their pockets remain deep. Their ambitions remain vast. And with the chance to cement a dynasty now thrust upon them, their willingness to spend doesn't appear to be waning.

In Snell, the Dodgers took their biggest weakness from this October's World Series run — a lack of reliable starting pitching — and added an instant potential fix, inking a veteran southpaw who, for long stretches of his nine-year career, has been one of the most dominant pitchers in the majors. "As we were [See Dodgers, B9]

MLS CUP :: GALAXY VS. NEW YORK

SATURDAY AT DIGNITY HEALTH SPORTS PARK | TV: CHANNEL 11, APPLE TV+, 1 P.M.

Not easy to plug hole left by Puig

Galaxy must adjust with injured star out for final

BY KEVIN BAXTER

In a team sport no player is irreplaceable. But for the Galaxy, Riqui Puig comes close.

Puig, the playmaker and leader of one of the most potent attacks in franchise history, will miss Saturday's MLS Cup final with the New York Red Bulls at Dignity Health Sports Park after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee in last weekend's Western Conference final with Seattle. He will undergo surgery soon and is expected to be out until at least next summer.

And that leaves the Galaxy searching for a replacement for their most irreplaceable player.

"We're definitely going to miss Riqui," midfielder Mark Delgado said Tuesday. "Special player. He just brings something completely different that nobody can really bring."

"We just have to move forward. The game stops for no one and we just have to sort it out. And that's Greg's job."

Greg would be [See Galaxy, B9]



ETIENNE LAURENT Associated Press

RIQUI PUIG, right, tore an ACL in the conference final. The Galaxy averaged just 1.6 goals a game with him out of the lineup this season.

Bad signs mount for wobbly Lakers

Their record is above .500 after 21 games, but their problems won't be easy to solve.

DAN WOIKE ON THE LAKERS

MINNEAPOLIS — After his team's worst offensive game since he joined the Lakers in 2018, LeBron James was asked how he'd assess the season now that the team had played more than a quarter of its games.

"Wouldn't say I'll take it," he said of the Lakers' 12-9 record. "I'll never want to say that."

But James pointed out some indisputable facts. Yes, the team has an entirely new coaching staff. Yes, the team is running new offensive and defensive systems. Yes, players are adjusting to new roles and new players are being integrated.

JJ Redick's pregame assessment of the first quarter of the Lakers' season as "uneven and inconsistent" is, honestly, probably to be expected. So why do things feel so awful?

Well, part of that is recency bias. After scoring only 80 points in a lopsided loss at Minnesota — on a [See Lakers, B7]



ABBIE PARR Associated Press

LEBRON JAMES, looking toward Cam Reddish on Monday night, is struggling from three-point range.

UCLA tries to keep its class intact

As early signing day arrives, the Bruins will get a better idea of where they stand going into 2025. **B8**

Trojans hope to halt recruits' exodus

USC and coach Lincoln Riley have had numerous out-of-state players decommit in recent months. **B8**

Boxer 'El Magnifico' dies at 46

Israel Vázquez, a three-time champion from Mexico, battled health issues after a grueling career. **B6**



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

THE ALL-AROUND game of Sebastian Mack (12) stood out in front of a lively home crowd Tuesday night. The reserve had 16 points, five rebounds and three assists.

Mack sparks UCLA win in Big Ten debut

BY BEN BOLCH

Mack Attack. The Return of the Mack. The Mack Strikes Back. Every nickname fit Sebastian Mack on Tuesday night, when the UCLA guard came off the bench to spark his team every time it needed a lift in its first-ever Big Ten Conference game. It wasn't just Mack's usual array of drives toward the basket that helped the Bruins hold off Washington for a 69-58 victory at Pauley Pavilion. The sophomore also was a

steadying force with his rebounding and defense. He finished with 16 points, five rebounds, three assists and one steal as the Bruins (7-1) won their sixth consecutive game heading into a road showdown against unbeaten Oregon on Sunday. Mack's three-pointer with 4 minutes 13 seconds left lifted UCLA to an 11-point lead, energizing the liveliest home crowd of the season. Forward Tyler Bilodeau contributed 16 points and nine rebounds and point guard Dylan Andrews added 12 points for the Bruins.

After Mick Cronin's team beat up on practically every nonconference opponent, UCLA's victories coming by an average of 33 points, the coach wanted to see if the same favorable trends would hold up in the Big Ten opener. Could the Bruins still force turnovers at an absurd rate? Could they make scoring a chore? Could they win comfortably? No, yes and yes. UCLA forced only 12 turnovers and made just 11 of 22 free throws but prevailed thanks to its usual suffocating defense that limited

Washington to 38.8% shooting. Forward Great Osobor scored 14 points for the Huskies (6-2), who made only three of 16 three-pointers (18.8%). UCLA withstood a sloppy stretch in which it went scoreless for more than six minutes to hold a 29-24 halftime lead. It looked like the Bruins might give Washington the same sort of flogging it handed its previous opponents when backup center Aday Mara made a putback to cap a 12-0 run that gave UCLA a 23-12 advantage. The 7-foot-3 Mara had been a

huge factor to that point, piling up four points, three rebounds and two blocks in only seven minutes before picking up a second foul and heading to the bench. The Huskies countered with a 9-0 run fueled in part by UCLA turnovers. Andrews was an especially egregious culprit, losing his dribble for one turnover and failing to get the ball inbounds within five seconds for another. UCLA was fortunate that Mack went on the attack, repeatedly driving to the basket and getting fouled to help his team extend its narrow cushion.

Clippers keep rolling despite failing to advance in NBA Cup

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

The Clippers were eliminated from NBA Cup contention during Tuesday night's game against the Portland Trail Blazers at the Intuit Dome. The primary goal on this night, however, was for the Clippers to continue to compete at a high level and play their smothering defense. With Norman Powell scoring with efficiency and James Harden keeping up his offensive production, the Clippers pulled off a 127-105 win over the Trail Blazers. The Clippers have won eight of their last 10 games with sustained grit and by following the lead of Powell and Harden. Powell started strong, making his first five shots en route to going 11 for 15 from the field and five for seven from three-point range in a 30-point effort. For Harden, it was another milestone game. Finishing with 23 points, Harden has scored 26,399 points over his 16-year career, pushing him past Paul Pierce for 17th on the NBA's all-time scoring list. Harden also had seven assists and made a three-pointer at the end of the third quarter to cap his scoring effort and give the Clippers a 13-point lead. The Clippers took control in the

third quarter, holding the Trail Blazers (8-14) to 20 points. And they didn't hold back in the fourth, building a 26-point lead. They shot 55.3% from the field and 51.4% from three-point range in the game. The only bad news for the Clippers was the loss of Terance Mann to a left finger injury in the third quarter. The Clippers finished NBA Cup play 2-2. But with a 14-9 overall record, the Clippers have kept their focus on giving the right kind of effort in every game. "We just can't get comfortable," Clippers coach Tyrone Lue said. "Our goal is to be a top-five defense into the season and we're doing that so we can't let go of the rope from doing that. And then just having the right mindset every single night. "When we come in for walk-throughs and shootarounds, we have to take advantage of those times because we haven't had time to practice all month, because we play every day, or every other day. So, just locking in, being mentally sharp, watching film, understanding what we need to do, and I think our guys have done a good job with that so far." The Clippers next play Wednesday when they host Minnesota. —BRODERICK TURNER



MARK J. TERRILL Associated Press

DERRICK JONES JR. throws down a dunk over Trail Blazers guards Anfernee Simons, left, and Shaedon Sharpe in the Clippers' 127-105 win at Intuit Dome, their eighth victory in 10 games.

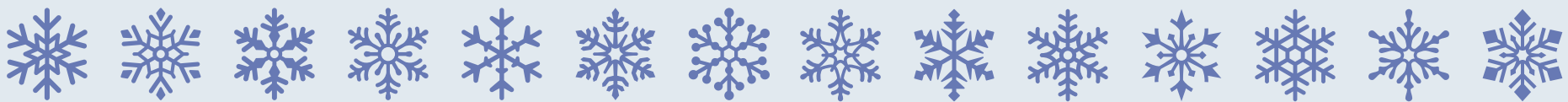
USC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL Watkins' nine threes set Trojans record

JuJu Watkins hit a school record and career-high nine three-pointers and scored 40 points as No. 6 USC routed California Baptist 94-52 at Galen Center. The Trojans (7-1) earned their third consecutive blowout victory since losing to then-No. 6 Notre

Dame 74-61 on Saturday. Watkins was nine of 11 to break the previous school record of seven threes. After making just one three in the first quarter, she hit three in a row in the second. The sophomore tied her career best with her sixth three in the third and added three more before she sat down with 4:08 remaining in the game. Kiki Iriafen added 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Trojans. Talia von Oelhoffen had 14 points and six assists and Rayah Marshall had 10 points and 10 rebounds. Watkins and Iriafen have scored

in double figures in all eight games so far. Tuesday's game was Watkins' 16th with at least 30 points, with 14 of those coming last year as a freshman. The Trojans had a season-best 12 blocked shots with 20 assists and only nine turnovers. Grace Schmidt has 12 points and seven rebounds to lead the Lancers (0-9), who are missing a couple of key players because of injuries. USC makes its Big Ten debut on Saturday when it visits Oregon. —ASSOCIATED PRESS





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ENTERTAINMENT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024 • LATIMES.COM/ENTERTAINMENT



JHARREL JEROME stars as one-legged high school and college champion wrestler Anthony Robles in “Unstoppable.”

GRAPPLING WITH A TRUE STORY

Jharrel Jerome overcame delays to play one-legged wrestler Robles

By MICHAEL ORDOÑA

Jharrel Jerome was 22 and fresh off an Emmy win as one of the Exonerated Five in “When They See Us” when a great role seemingly fell in his lap — the lead in “Unstoppable.” It’s the story of Anthony Robles, the wrestler who won a 2011 NCAA championship despite being born with only one leg. But the physical challenges turned out to be just part of the obstacles with which Jerome would grapple.

“It was the first moment where I got to

feel the fruits of my labor in terms of winning the Emmy because I got a phone call, man, and it was just like, ‘Hey, we have this project that we think is a perfect fit for you,’” he says. It was 2019. He met the real Robles and started training with him — Robles serves as Jerome’s double in the wrestling scenes — lifting weights, wrestling and building a friendship over months. Then March 2020 happened.

“We shut down entirely for a year and a half,” says Jerome, now 27, of the

COVID-19 pandemic. “It was the first time I got to see the back end of a production for several years; see it work and fall apart and come back together, and all the ins and outs. So, I learned a lot.”

But through the uncertainty of whether the biopic was still happening, he and Robles stayed in touch and became close.

“I crashed on his couch a couple times. I had food in his backyard. I met his girl-

[See Jerome, E6]



San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
ROBERT Bechtle’s “Alameda Gran Torino” in “Ordinary People” show.

ART REVIEW

MOCA sheds new light on a genre’s ‘work’

Photorealism, once dismissed as simplistic, gets due respect in a compelling exhibition.

CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT
ART CRITIC

Photorealism has always been confusing. A genre of mostly paintings whose subject matter is photographs and whose prevailing style is precise illusionism began to emerge in the late 1960s. From the get-go, it was controversial.

The 20th century had seen pure abstraction claimed as visual art’s pinnacle. Paintings dependent on photography’s figurative images faced a steep climb.

The insecure bafflement over Photorealism was reflected in a sudden ‘70s glut of competing terms — Superrealism, Hyperrealism, Sharp-focus Realism, Post-Pop Illusionism, New Realism, Radical Realism. Add the contemporaneous arrival of a lively market for contemporary art, which had barely existed earlier in 20th century America, and all those rival brand names could seem like desperate promotional efforts to crack the market with comfortably retrograde, highly salable pictures.

At the Museum of Contemporary Art, “Ordinary People — Photorealism and the Work of Art Since 1968” is one attempt to refocus the subject. The show does a pretty good job of it, despite a couple of strange omissions and some odd inclusions. Generally, perspective is gained.

A few of its artists have always been embraced for conceptual rigor — most prominently Vija Celmins, whose images copy photographs of deserts and sea-

[See MOCA, E2]

‘Annie Hall’ co-writer dies

Academy Award winner Marshall Brickman, co-writer of “Annie Hall” and “Jersey Boys,” has died at age 85. **E2**

Comics **E4-5**
Puzzles **E5**

A heroic sculptural tradition is laid bare

Naked men looking awkward: Christina A. West plays with poses of power in her art.

By SCARLET CHENG

At the American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona, an audacious installation by Christina A. West called “Strut” left some early visitors feeling uneasy — which was the point.

“She’s really pushing the boundaries,” says Beth Ann Gerstein, executive director of the museum, who invited West to present an exhibition that opened this fall with a live model. “I can’t tell

you how many people told me how uncomfortable they were with the guy.”

West is a ceramic artist known for her explorations of the human form in provocative ways. At the museum, two of her ceramic stumps, or armatures, sit several feet high, both a fleshy pink with streaks of white and red. On opening day of the exhibition, a nude model in his late 40s clambered on each ceramic sculpture and struck a series of poses — kneeling, sprawling, walking in what West calls a “strut” pose.

“I am a fan of awkwardness in my work,” West said in a phone interview. “So much of the representations we see in classical sculpture

[See ‘Strut,’ E3]

Better living through modern design



ARCHITECTURAL POTTERY varied its basic shapes with different textures and glazes. In the foreground are designs by company co-founder John Folli.

DAN CHAVKIN

A new show illustrates why postwar ceramics from Architectural Pottery still inspire.

By SCARLET CHENG

In the optimistic postwar period of the 1950s, all things seemed possible, including the notion that design could make Americans live better and be better. Into this mix of new art and design in Southern California came an upstart company that focused on everyday ceramics for the Modernist mindset: Architectural Pottery.

The name may easily be mistaken for its generic, lowercase counterpart. However, “Architectural

[See Ceramics, E3]

MARSHALL BRICKMAN,
1939 – 2024

‘Annie Hall’ and ‘Jersey Boys’ were among bona fides

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The Oscar-winning screenwriter Marshall Brickman, whose wide-ranging career spanned some of Woody Allen’s best films, the Broadway musical “Jersey Boys” and a number of Johnny Carson’s most beloved sketches, has died. He was 85.

Brickman died Friday in Manhattan, his daughter Sophie Brickman told the New York Times. No cause of death was cited.

Brickman was best known for his extensive collaboration with Allen, beginning with the 1973 film “Sleeper.” Together, they co-wrote “Annie Hall” (1977), “Manhattan” (1979) and “Manhattan Murder Mystery” (1993). The loosely structured script for “Annie Hall,” in particular, has been hailed for its wit. It won Brickman and Allen an Oscar for original screenplay.

In his acceptance speech (Allen skipped the ceremony), Brickman referenced one of the film’s oft-quoted lines, saying: “I’ve been out here a week, and I still have guilt when I make a right turn on a red light.”

“If the film is worth anything,” Brickman told Vanity Fair in 2017, “it gives a very particular specific image of what it was like to be alive in New York at that time in that particular social-economic stratum.”

Brickman and Allen met in the early 1960s, when Allen was breaking through as a stand-up comedian. Brickman was brought on to write jokes for him. At the time, he had been playing banjo for the folk group the Tarriers. In one of the many twists of Brickman’s career, it was an album he and his college roommate Eric Weissberg recorded that later made the soundtrack to 1972’s “Deliverance,” including “Dueling Banjos.”

Brickman, born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was the son of Jewish socialists Abram (who fled Poland during World War II) and Pauline (Wolin) Brickman, who was from New York. They later moved to the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, where Brickman grew up. His start in show business, after graduating from the University of

Wisconsin with degrees in science and music, came with the Tarriers. He replaced Alan Arkin in the group.

“One of the reasons I was asked to join was because they needed somebody to front the group and talk while everybody was tuning up,” Brickman told the Writers Guild in 2011. “And so I started to develop little jokes and routines and stuff like that.”

By the late ‘60s, Brickman was head writer for Carson’s “The Tonight Show.” There, one of his most enduring contributions was the Carnac the Magnificent sketches, during which Carson played a “mystic from the East” who could divine answers to unseen questions.

Brickman’s other TV stints included “Candid Camera,” “The Dick Cavett Show” and “The Muppet Show.”

When Brickman and Allen began writing together, they found a natural chemistry, with Brickman playing a supporting role to Allen’s semi-autobiographical material.

“We didn’t write scenes together. I think that’s the death for any collaboration,” Brickman told the Writers Guild. “I don’t think there’s any such thing really as an equal collaboration. I think that in any collaboration, one person, one personality, one point of view has to dominate.”

Brickman wrote and directed the 1980 film “Simon,” starring Arkin as a psychology professor brainwashed into believing he’s from outer space. He also directed 1983’s “Lovesick,” with Alec Guinness as the ghost of Sigmund Freud, and 1986’s “The Manhattan Project,” about a high schooler who builds a nuclear weapon for a school project.

With Rick Elice penning the music, Brickman wrote the Broadway musical “Jersey Boys,” about the 1960s rock group the Four Seasons. It ran on Broadway for 12 years beginning in 2005. He and Elice also wrote the 2010 musical “The Addams Family.”

Brickman is survived by his wife, Nina Feinberg, daughters Sophie and Jessica, and five grandchildren.



Photographs by CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT Los Angeles Times

JESSE Treviño’s 1974 storefront painting, left, and John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres’ 1981 wall-relief photos.

A sprawling MOCA exhibition gives Photorealist painting its due at last

[MOCA, from E1] scapes, as well as book and magazine pictures; and the late Chuck Close, whose giant paintings enlarge photographs of portrait heads. Many others — painters of Pontiacs, drugstore facades or gumball machines — were dismissed as frivolous.

But it was never clear how or why. Choosing to make a detailed painting of a photograph itself created an abstraction — if “abstract” is defined as the quality of dealing with an idea, rather than an event. Somehow, that simple notion was hard to grasp. Maybe photography’s then long-standing status as a lesser art was part of the reason why.

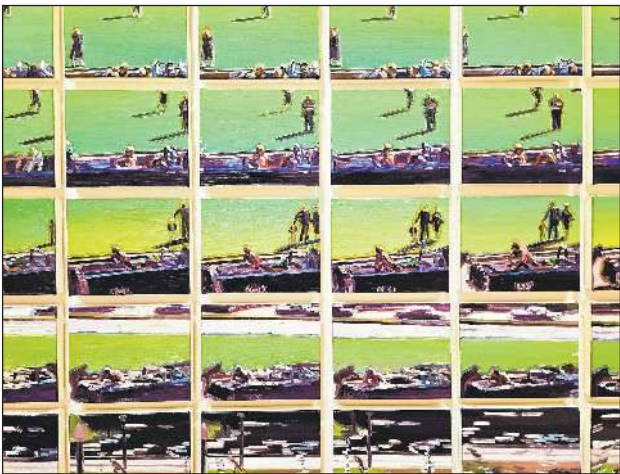
“Ordinary People — Photorealism and the Work of Art Since 1968” highlights two aspects, both keyed to its somewhat cumbersome title. First, the field is enlarged to include top-notch artists in subsequent generations, whose work reflects an ongoing Photorealist legacy. And second, an often ignored quality of the work is given a serious look.

That largely disregarded element is the simple fact that Photorealist art is labor intensive. MOCA curator Anna Katz and curatorial assistant Paula Kroll emphasize the *work* in a work of art.

Work applies to the production of any significant art, of course, even when the material is an object found in a dumpster, or a set of instructions typed on a sheet of paper. We’re not talking about coal mining or Amazon home delivery here, but Photorealism does look laborious. It wears work on its sleeve.

Celmins’ 1968 drawings of old black-and-white photographs torn from history books — a 1930s zeppelin airship, Hiroshima’s nearly obliterated 1945 landscape — begin with a sheet of paper prepared with a ground of snow-white acrylic. The surface is made receptive to the delicate movements of soft graphite across the page. Careful pencil marks are placed on an aesthetic pedestal, while the speed of a camera’s shutter-click in shooting the source material is slowed to the crawl of a careful drawing.

The result is a palpably



CYNTHIA Daignault’s provocative “Twenty-Six Seconds,” a MOCA commission for the exhibition, is a monumental meditation of the 1963 Zapruder film.

concentrated, disarming sense of focus. Your eye responds to the artist’s subtle touch. Suddenly, it occurs that the chosen scenes favor things that cannot themselves be touched — aerial flight high overhead, out of reach, or deadly radioactive space left by an exploded nuclear bomb. Historical memory is likewise remote. Thought fills these voids, and an unexpected moral grandeur blankets images lavished with such care. Subject matter and art object fuse.

Half a century later comes Cynthia Daignault’s provocative “Twenty-Six Seconds,” a MOCA commission for the show from the Baltimore artist, newly completed and having its debut. Its subject is the famous 1963 Abraham Zapruder film, which recorded the Dallas murder of President Kennedy. Daignault painted each of the film’s 486 frames on separate 8-by-10-inch canvases — the size of a standard still photo — and installed them in a grid, 18 canvases high and 27 wide. It’s monumental, like the event.

The paint handling is loose. Each form or shadow is constructed from a brushstroke, introducing the artist’s hand into the cold machinery of camera work. The moments before the fatal shooting fill the grid’s upper half, while the tragic denouement unfolds at a viewer’s vulnerable eye-level. The horrific, lethal, split-second impact comes in frame 313, from seven rows up from the bottom and 16 frames to the right, where a burst of vertical light interrupts the horizontal flow of the terrible pictorial narrative.

After another row or two, Daignault’s canvases become increasingly abstract, finally dissolving into blurred daubs of color against black fields. As a meticulous representation of the inexplicable, which clings to arguably the most censored and conspiracy-riddled major episode of modern American history, “Twenty-Six Seconds” is both remarkable and moving.

Needless to say, Daignault’s “Twenty-Six Seconds” took far longer to make than Zapruder’s. Katz, writing in the show’s catalog, reasonably speculates that the visible labor involved in Photorealist art is one reason first-generation examples weren’t well received. Art is a conversation among artists, making the contentious history of avant-garde art a highly specialized field. But suddenly, a general public could embrace the Photorealist genre — partly because the images were recognizable, yes, but equally because the detailed precision represented hard work.

“My child could do that” is the cliché (and erroneous) refrain of the uninformed viewer of Modern art, especially abstraction. Now, the response flipped. The art world was dismissing the popular reception of Photorealism with a similarly narrow-minded explanation: Ordinary people, whose experience was being represented, liked it. Katz suggests that the artists’ apparent desire for a popular hug alienated a cloistered art public.

To top it off, the curators underscore something few are willing to acknowledge: As a technical matter, almost anyone can learn to draw and paint realistically. With enough practice, your child could probably get the hang of it too. As technique, Photorealist competence is just a matter of — well, work.

To demonstrate, Close’s meticulously detailed head of mustachioed “Robert,” 9 feet tall, is installed next to its maquette, an enlarged and subdivided black-and-white photograph overlaid with a tight grid. Close just had to replicate the tiny squares of darks and lights on his canvas, like following a map. It was a whole lot of work.

Almost half of the 44 artists in “Ordinary People” are first-generation, born in the tumultuous period between the Roaring ‘20s’ collapse into the Great Depression and the end of World War II. They matured during decades when camera images, still and moving, from broadsheets and tabloids to TV and CinemaScope, became ubiquitous in American life. In retrospect, the fact that camera images themselves would become a subject seems inevitable.

Like the rest of the art scene, the genre’s earliest noted practitioners were almost exclusively white males. Among them are Robert Bechtle, portraitist of automobiles, including a shrewdly chosen Gran Torino station wagon whose wood paneling modernizes the Conestogas of manifest destiny; Richard Estes and Ralph Goings, recorders of urban and suburban shops and diners; and Richard McLean, whose leisure-rodeo cowboys and cowgirls are cosplay hobbyists.

Katz expanded the horizon, especially for subsequent generations. Among the superlative examples since the ‘80s are wall-size works by the team of John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres, whose sculptural reliefs of kids at play transform the mural tradition. Judie Bamber’s small drawings and watercolors of her father’s intimate photographs of her mother bring hidden familial dynamics into anxious view. Takako Yamaguchi’s exploded

close-ups of women’s clothing — trench coat, striped skirt and belt, crochet top — morph into strangely geometric abstractions.

Exquisite pastel portraits of Latino friends and neighbors by John Valadez; an altar-like assembly of 46 panels by Ben Sakoguchi tracking the cold-eyed evolution of nuclear terrorism; a Kehinde Wiley promotional portrait of hip-hop aristocracy — the range is wide. Feminist sexual politics unfold in takes on commercial erotica by Marilyn Minter, Joan Semmel and Betty Tompkins; a wry and confrontational boudoir still life by Audrey Flack, like an overhauled ad from Glamour magazine; and Andrea Bowers’ surveillance-style paean to socially engaged working women.

Sometimes, though, the enlarged view slips out of focus. Marilyn Levine was an exceptional ceramicist who built detailed useful objects — shoes, garments and accessories (backpacks, handbags) — from useless slabs of fired clay. But her beguiling illusion of soft leather rendered as hard sculpture doesn’t betray any photographic subject matter.

Nonfunctional hyperrealism, yes; Photorealism, no.

Omissions are puzzling too. An obvious list would include Robert Cottingham’s signature landscapes of elaborate neon signage and Malcolm Morley’s souvenir postcards of cruise ships and recruiting posters of naval destroyers. Perhaps most unexpected is the absence of Charles Bell’s monumental toys and candy machines, which explode harsh photographic light, as well as Richard Artschwager’s acute architectural constructions painted on Celotex board, a building material that serves as an ironic ground for precision pictures of offices being demolished or off-kilter tract homes.

MOCA, in its permanent collection, has terrific — and pertinent — photo-based examples by Morley and Artschwager. But they’re not included, perhaps to make room for new works like Alfonso Gonzalez Jr.’s big “Pawn Shop,” a wall-size compendium of commercial advertisements mixing poignancy with desperation, and Sayre Gomez’s haunted street-side shrine to an anonymous urban death.

Glowing below background signs for a liquor store, a laundromat and an Echo Park burger joint, Gomez shrewdly identifies the specific street through a blazing sunset, glimpsed off in the distance. Pacific life is far away. The coming veil of darkness is announced with a jab of 2024 topicality. “Ordinary People” neatly puts to rest any lingering skittishness about Photorealist validity.

‘Ordinary People — Photorealism and the Work of Art Since 1968’

Where: Museum of Contemporary Art, 250 S. Grand Ave., L.A.

When: Tuesdays-Sundays, through May 4

Admission: Free

Info: (213) 633-5351, moca.org



MARY ALTAFFER Associated Press

A MASTER OF WIT

Marshall Brickman, a screenwriter and director, was best known for his work with Woody Allen.

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ROYAL 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. West L.A. MARIA [R] 4:10 PM MARIA [R] 7:10 PM ERNEST COLE: LOST AND FOUND 4:00 PM ERNEST COLE: LOST AND FOUND 1:00 7:20 REINAS 1:40 4:20 TIDDLER 1:00 PM MONICA 1332 Second Street Santa Monica PORCELAIN WAR [R] 1:00 3:10 5:15 7:30 ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT 1:10 7:10 A REAL PAIN [R] 1:00 3:05 5:10 7:20 CONCLAVE [PG] 1:00 4:10 ANORA [R] 4:00 7:00 IN BETWEEN STARS AND SCARS: MASTERS OF CINEMA 1:30 4:30 7:30 LIVING LARGE 1:10 3:10 5:15 7:20	TOWN CENTER 17200 Ventura Blvd. Encino MARIA [R] 1:10 4:10 7:20 MOANA 2 [PG] 1:20 4:30 7:20 WICKED [PG] 1:00 3:55 7:10 ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT 1:10 4:20 7:10 A REAL PAIN [R] 12:55 3:05 5:15 7:30 NEWHALL 22500 Lyons Ave. Santa Clarita MARIA [R] 1:00 3:55 7:00 MOANA 2 [PG] 1:20 3:30 4:30 6:30 7:30 BONHOEFFER: PASTOR. SPY. ASSASSIN. [PG-13] 7:10 PM GLADIATOR II [R] 12:45 4:00 7:20 WICKED [PG] 1:00 3:55 7:10 HELLO, LOVE, AGAIN 4:10 PM RED ONE [PG-13] 1:10 4:10 7:15 THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER [PG] 12:45 PM A REAL PAIN [R] 1:30 PM	GLENDALE 207 N. Maryland Ave Glendale MARIA [R] 1:20 4:20 7:20 WICKED [PG] 1:00 3:45 7:00 THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ALLEE WILLIS 7:30 PM ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT 12:50 7:10 A REAL PAIN [R] 4:30 PM ANORA [R] 12:50 4:00 MY SWEET LAND 1:00 3:05 5:15 7:30	NoHo 7 5240 Lankershim Blvd. No. Hollywood MOANA 2 [PG] 1:20 4:30 7:30 GLADIATOR II [R] 12:45 4:00 7:20 WICKED [PG] 1:00 3:55 7:10 A REAL PAIN [R] 12:45 2:55 5:05 CONCLAVE [PG] 1:10 PM ANORA [R] 12:50 4:00 7:15 MISS OR MISSES 1:20 4:20 7:00 STILETTO [R] STADIUM SEATING; 7:30 PM STILETTO [R] 6:30 PM THE HOLIDAY CLUB 7:30 PM CLAREMONT 450 W 2nd Street Claremont MARIA [R] 12:50 7:00 MOANA 2 [PG] 1:20 4:30 7:30 GLADIATOR II [R] 12:45 4:00 7:20 WICKED [PG] 1:00 3:55 7:10 RED ONE [PG-13] 1:10 PM A REAL PAIN [R] 4:20 PM ANORA [R] 3:50 PM
BARGAIN IN () [CC] CLOSED CAPTION [NS] NON-STANDARD PRICING		FOR 12/4/2024 ONLY	

Better living through Architectural Pottery

[Ceramics, from E1]
Pottery: Ceramics for a Modern Landscape,” an exhibition running through March 2 at the American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona, aims to change that notion and help visitors realize that many of the geometric planters they’ve seen in gardens and homes over the years were the output of one dynamic company founded in Los Angeles in 1950, Architectural Pottery.

The company’s products were featured in the Museum of Modern Art’s “Good Design” exhibitions in the early 1950s and often shown in John Entenza’s influential Arts & Architecture magazine. Two hundred pieces were ordered for the Beverly Hilton during its construction in the mid-’50s. “Wilshire Boulevard is almost an embarrassment to us,” the company’s co-founder, Max Lawrence, said in a 1967 L.A. Magazine article. “The plants growing in front of every major building are in our pots.”

The museum exhibition is an offshoot of a book project by Dan Chavkin, who has photographed Modernist homes across the Coachella Valley.

“He kept seeing these beautiful but radically different planters in people’s backyards,” said Jo Lauria, the exhibition’s curator. “He wrote a book proposal, with the idea of making the connection between Mid-century Modern architecture and ceramics.”

Monacelli Press accepted the proposal, and Chavkin enlisted Lauria and Jeffrey Head to do the writing for a book with the same title as the show.

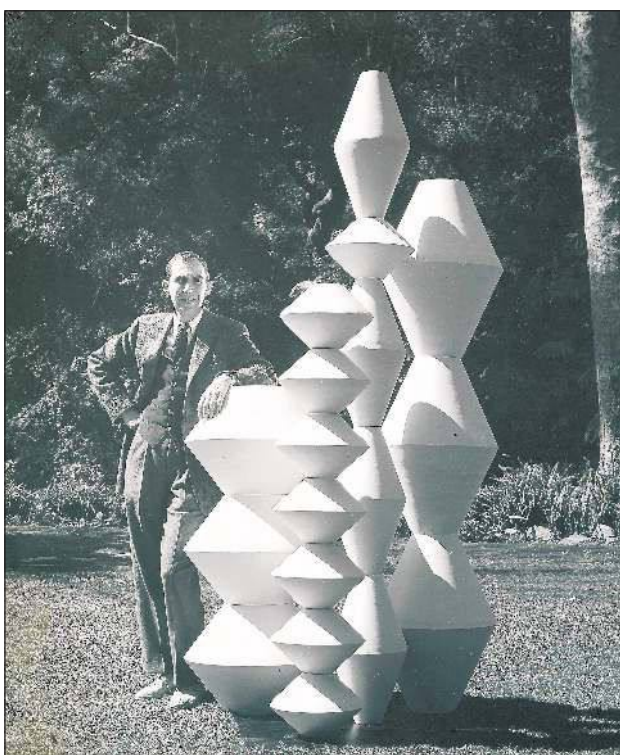
Architectural Pottery formed in 1950 as a partnership between Rita and Max Lawrence and two California School of Art grads, John Follis and Rex Goode. Follis and Goode had taken a class with LaGardo Tackett to design and market ceramic products with a modern look. Rita Lawrence, a self-described bored housewife and new mother looking for a creative project, noted that much of the pottery she saw was classic Italian, Spanish or Renaissance in design and that little seemed suited for the emerging modern L.A.

Architectural Pottery launched from the Lawrences’ Gregory Ain-designed house in Mar Vista, and Rita Lawrence ran the business from there for years, until the company established an office on South Robertson Boulevard. She was president of the company, keenly involved in sales and marketing, but she also saw her role as educational. In the postwar building boom, there was a need for sand urns and planters, accent sculpture and tableware, all of which the company produced, but she also thought good modern design — open, light-filled homes connected to gardens — created a sense of optimism and well-being.

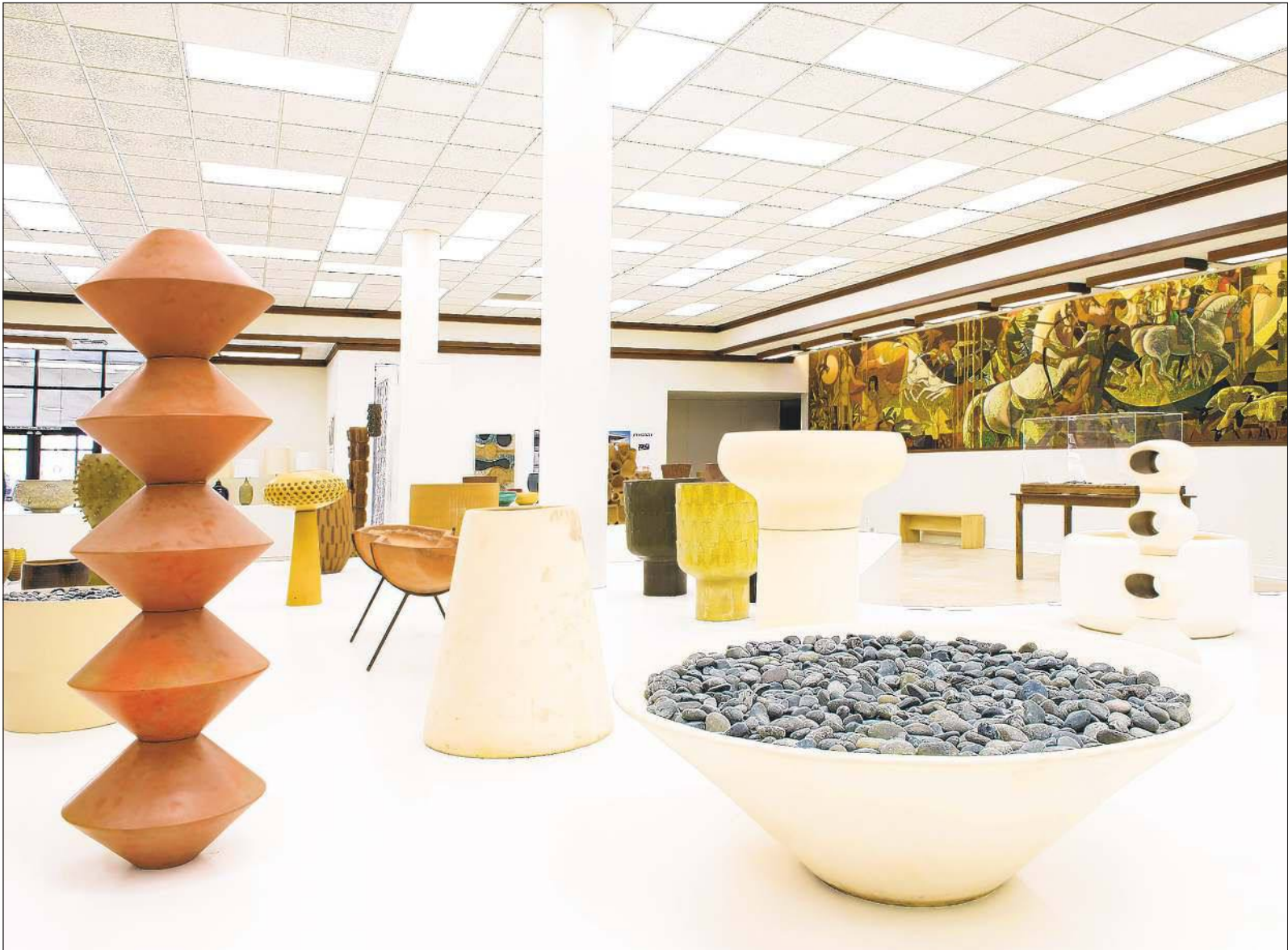
The exhibition starts with a history of the company, with photographs of the Lawrences and early collaborators, plus a photo gallery of their key designers and 3D examples of their work. Rita was particularly open to working with young



From Max and Rita Lawrence, Architectural Pottery Records, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA / Monacelli Press



GEORGE SZANIK Monacelli Press



DAN CHAVKIN

A SHOW in Pomona on Architectural Pottery includes images from its history — a 1964 view inside the company’s Robertson Boulevard showroom, top left, and LaGardo Tackett in 1957 with totems he designed, top right — plus displays of its pots, planters and more, above.

‘Architectural Pottery: Ceramics for a Modern Landscape’

Where: American Museum of Ceramic Art, 399 N. Garey Ave., Pomona
When: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays to Sundays
Admission: \$7 to \$14
Info: amoca.org

potters as well as designers not versed in ceramics. Perhaps the most important employee, Lauria said, was David Cressey, who had studied ceramics with

Vivika Heino at USC and Laura Andreson at UCLA. Starting in 1961, Cressey oversaw production for the company and pioneered some designs himself.

At the company’s factory, basic forms were mass produced through molds. Pieces could be customized with different colors, textures and configurations. Cressey developed a formula for liquid clay and experimented with overlapping glazes and new textures. He created a texture called Phoenix by repeatedly ramming the end of a 2-by-4 into wet clay.

“He had this library of molds, and then he would establish a vocabulary of textures and glazes,” Lauria said. “So at the end of the business, there were 14 tex-

tures and about 11 glazes that you could choose from.”

Walk through the exhibition, and so many of the vessels will be familiar: an hour-glass form made of two cones fused together, textured bowls on simple metal stands, a large egg standing on its end — works sourced from more than 20 lenders. The objects are now highly prized collectibles that can sell for thousands on Etsy or 1stDibs. And yes, there were, and are, plenty of knockoffs. One of the weaknesses of the business was how easily its products were copied.

The exhibition design by Gary Wexler reflects the clean, Modernist look of the objects on display. A large display platform in the middle of the gallery has an undulating form and rounded

corners. The design is an aesthetic choice, echoing the biomorphic shapes of some Architectural Pottery, but it’s also practical, allowing the viewer to get closer to the exhibits. Wexler also designed the book, which handsomely balances reproductions of magazine ads and catalog pages with historic shots of Architectural Pottery personnel, showrooms and workshops, as well as contemporary photographs of the objects in gardens and interiors.

Follis and Goode sold their interest in the company in 1960. Of the featured designers in the exhibition, only one is still alive: Marilyn Kay Austin, who also was the company’s only staff designer during her time there. Fresh from the University of

Illinois with a degree in industrial design, she moved to California in 1962 in search of work and was introduced to Rita Lawrence.

“I’m sure that another place wouldn’t have been that quick to hire a woman,” Austin, now in her mid-80s, said in a phone interview. “It was a good place to work. I was fortunate.”

Austin began laying out Architectural Pottery advertisements and catalogs at a time when the work was cut-and-paste. She later designed sand urns and containers. Sand urns were much in demand in public spaces, she said, because so many people smoked.

Because she was not a ceramicist, she drew her designs and occasionally sculpted her prototypes from foam and designers clay. She created the very popular Egg planter and was at the company for three years before she was let go. (She landed a far better-paying job at American Standard.) Now retired, Austin will be on a panel discussion at the museum at 2 p.m. Jan. 12.

The Lawrences sold their interest in Architectural Pottery (which had become Group Artec) in 1974, and the company shut down after a 1984 fire at its Manhattan Beach manufacturing facility. Rita Lawrence died in 1999 at age 80, and Max Lawrence lived to 98 before he died in 2010.

Today, Vessel USA manufactures some of Architectural Pottery’s original designs as new generations of consumers have discovered the planters, pots and totems that still stand as visual signatures of mid-century modernism.

“Architectural Pottery was originated to make a statement about today’s way of life, not to imitate or adapt the past,” Rita was quoted as saying. “The forms we have introduced have become symbols of their era; the forms we will do in the future will be different, as we perceive new requirements and a new architectural idiom.”

Heroic tradition laid bare

[‘Strut,’ from E1]
are so beautiful, with so much grace and symmetry. I’ve always wanted to counter that. The idealism I’ve seen in historical representations of the body doesn’t feel real to me.”

West received her bachelor’s in fine arts from Siena Heights University in Adrian, Mich., in 2003 and her master’s in fine arts from Alfred University in Alfred, N.Y., in 2006. She taught art at Georgia State University from 2009 to 2022 before moving to the art department at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Often, her work deals with the human form in dysmorphic ways, with faces sliced away or figures painted stark red and white.

West has given some thought as to why she does what she does.

“I think it comes partially from my background as an athlete,” she said. “I was a competitive runner in high school and in college, and so I spent a lot of time training and having sore muscles and thinking about my body me-

‘Strut’

What: Christina A. West’s two “Strut” pedestals (without live models), plus video of live models posing on the works
When: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays to Sundays, through Jan. 26
Where: American Museum of Ceramic Art, 399 N. Garey Ave., Pomona
Admission: \$7 to \$14
Info: (909) 865-3146, amoca.org

chanics.” Another factor is “just having extreme social anxiety for a long, long time. People were fascinating to me, but also scary. I would kind of clam up around people because my brain would short-circuit.”

While fascinated with the body, West didn’t want to create yet more female nudes, so ubiquitous in the history of art. Instead, given the sculptural tradition of heroic men posed against a pedestal, and as a flip of

the male gaze, she wanted “Strut” to reexamine men’s bodies and their positions of power.

Gerstein had seen West’s installations in other cities and watched her career grow.

“I just always find her work intriguing,” Gerstein said during a visit to the museum’s storage area to see two West artworks the museum owns: “Head First,” a 2013 sculpture of a pink, pregnant woman lying on her side, and a piece from her 2006 “Crouching” series depicting a man crouching in oversize boots.

The “Strut” show includes photographs showing close-ups of the nude male body, as well as two video monitors displaying two models posing on West’s sculptures.

“I like the fact that they’re a little creepy,” Gerstein said of West’s work, including her color choices. “I like things that make you a little uncomfortable, because then you have to think about, well, why does it make you uncomfortable?”

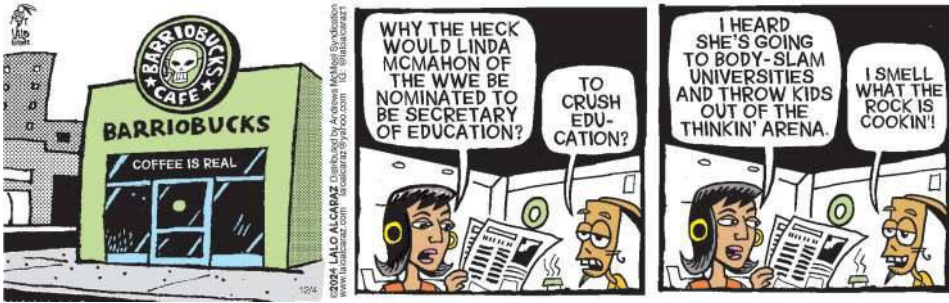


CHRISTINA A. WEST

MODEL poses awkwardly on one of Christina A. West’s pedestals during opening of “Strut” show at the American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona.

COMICS

LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz



CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia



CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell



LOOSE PARTS By Dave Blazek



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis



LIO By Mark Tatulli



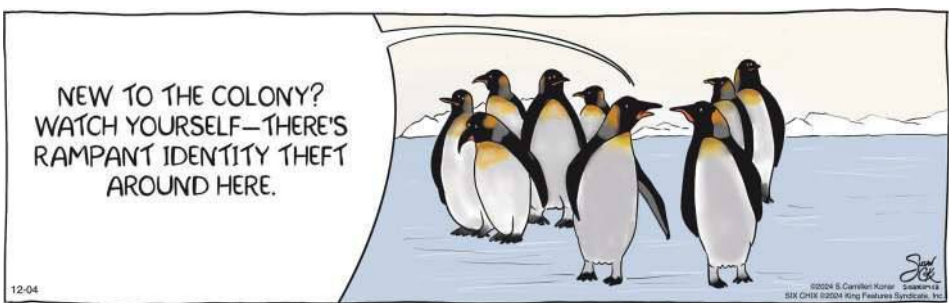
ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter



SIX CHIX By Susan Camilleri Konar



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett



NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



PICKLES By Brian Crane



BABY BLUES By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers



JUMP START By Robb Armstrong



MACANUDO By Liniers



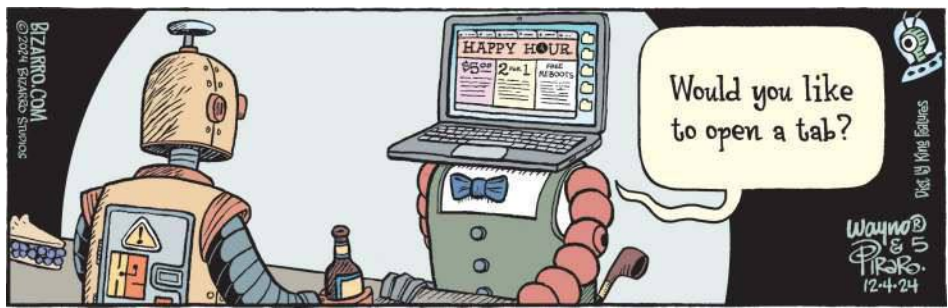
BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall



BETWEEN FRIENDS By Sandra Bell-Lundy



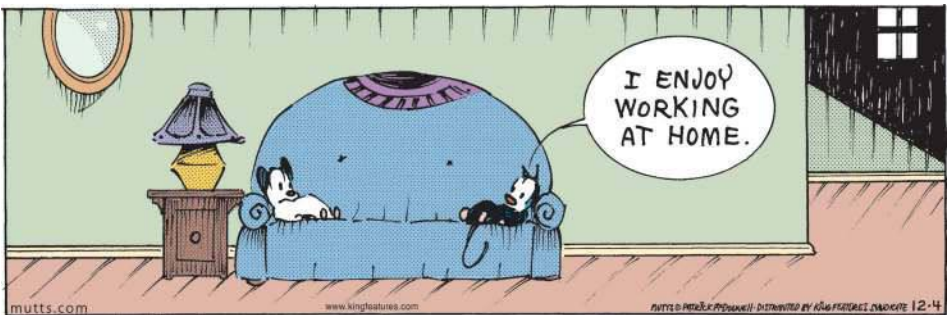
BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro



DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan



MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell



PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz





ANA CARBALLOSA Prime Video

ANTHONY ROBLES calls his mother, played in “Unstoppable” by Jennifer Lopez opposite Jharrel Jerome, “a hero in my life.”

Wrestling with the reality of man’s life

[**Jerome**, from E1] friend, who’s his wife now, which is so crazy. They have a newborn now,” Jerome says. “So, it became a soul project for me.”

Robles, of course, had his worries about his life becoming a movie. He says, “It was like, ‘Am I going to be looking back on this film for the rest of my life, thinking, “Yeah, it was pretty good, but that’s not me out there?” But with Jharrel, he took the time to

focus on the little details of my life and what makes me tick.”

When the industry came back to life, Artists Equity, the production company formed by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, got involved. William Goldenberg, the Oscar-winning editor of Affleck’s “Argo,” signed on to make his directorial debut, and just like that, things got serious for the Prime Video film opening Dec. 6 in limited

release.

Jerome went on a high-calorie diet (“3,500 to 4,000 calories a day,” he says), lifted weights to build a wrestler’s physique and worked with Goldenberg’s wife, movement coach Allison Diftler, to convincingly portray a lifelong crutches user.

Then there was the wrestling. And not just standard technique but Robles’ unique brand.

Jerome (whose right leg would be erased in postproduction but had to be kept out of the way during filming, “like a tail,” he says) had to learn to use “just my one knee and my fists as legs. ... That was about two to three hours a day, running choreography and different moves — how to take a shot, how to sprawl, fireman’s carry,” all as if he had only his left leg.

“The hardest part was the confidence. That’s how

you know a true wrestler. That confidence to be willing to get thrown in the air,” Jerome says. “There’s moments where, as an actual man who has lots of fears, I did not want to hurt myself. And there was no way I was going to be Anthony if that was my mindset.”

Being Robles, however, involved much more than looking legit on the mat. “Unstoppable” is as much about his family. Robles says

it was crucial that any film about his story relate “where my strength came from, and that’s always been my faith and my family, especially my mom [played by Jennifer Lopez]. My mom was a hero in my life. She still is.”

Jerome says he learned from those close to Robles “that he is the core to a lot of people’s lives around him. You can see it in they way they love him. He was the crutch — for lack of better words, I’m not trying to be ironic — he was the crutch for the family.”

But no one is strong all the time. The film depicts crushing defeats, reversals that the wrestling program suffered, an abusive situation at home.

“Those low moments, he won’t allow people to see because he’s a beacon of light for those people. I wanted to show his fears, his insecurities and what’s going on beyond the eyes and the big muscles,” Jerome says.

“I got to observe a lot of moments quietly, without him knowing. And that informed a lot of those emotional moments in the film. What he does with his eye when he cries — he fights, man. He fights to make sure that tear doesn’t come down.”

Robles says he could see himself in the actor’s portrayal.

“The scene with him and Coach Williams [played by Michael Peña], when they’re sitting in the bleachers, looking at the track, and he says, ‘I’m running out of time to be somebody’ ... I remember watching him [filming that scene], and I was crying. I felt, right there, he got me.”

“The emotion he was showing — because I’m not someone who really shows a lot of emotion; I try to hold it in. But right then and there, he exposed it. I was like, ‘Man, this dude’s amazing. He did me justice right there.’”

WAYNE NORTHROP, 1947 – 2024

TV actor made his mark on ‘Days of Our Lives’

By ALEXANDRA DEL ROSARIO

Actor Wayne Northrop, who was best known for his work in TV dramas “Dynasty,” “Days of Our Lives” and “Port Charles,” has died. He was 77.

Publicist Cynthia Snyder confirmed to The Times that Northrop died Nov. 29 at the Motion Picture and Television Fund home in Woodland Hills. His wife, “General Hospital” actor Lynn Herring, said in a statement that the actor “took his last breath in the arms of his family,” six years after he was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer’s.

“Wayne touched so many people with his sense of humor and wit,” said the statement, which also remembered Northrop as a “husband for 43 years, the best dad ever to his two boys, Hank and Grady, and a rancher who loved his cows and was a friend to many.”

Northrop, a Washington state native, enjoyed a television career that spanned more than 30 years, several networks and multiple hit dramas.

An alumnus of the Los Angeles Actors’ Theatre, founded by “The Waltons” star Ralph Waite, Northrop began his professional career in the late 1970s with minor roles in series including “The Waltons” as well as “Police Story” and “Eight Is Enough.”

Northrop secured his first multi-episode role when he joined the cast of the Emmy-winning ABC drama “Dynasty” in 1981. For 35 episodes, Northrop — appearing off and on over six years — played Michael Culhane, the chauffeur to John Forsythe’s oil tycoon Blake Carrington.

Though Northrop appeared in a fraction of “Dynasty’s” 200-plus episodes, his character wasn’t immune to the drama that unfolded over the seasons. Notably, Michael had romances with sisters Fallon and Amanda Carrington, portrayed by Pamela Sue Martin and Karen Cellini, respectively. Northrop’s “Dynasty” tenure ended in 1987 — after his character failed in his scheme to slight the Carrington patriarch.

Amid his “Dynasty” days, Northrop also starred in NBC’s long-running drama “Days of Our Lives.” He appeared in more than 1,000 episodes from 1981 to 2006



ABC Photo Archives

TV FIXTURE
Wayne Northrop appeared in “Dynasty.”

(he left and rejoined the series twice) and portrayed multiple characters, including police Det. Roman Brady and Dr. Alex North — both romantic interests of Marlena Evans, played by “Days” staple Deidre Hall. Northrop’s on-screen relationship with Hall also earned him a spot in her 1995 TV movie “Never Say Never: The Deidre Hall Story.”

Northrop’s TV career included 121 episodes as Rex Stanton on ABC’s “Port Charles” (a spinoff of “General Hospital”) and roles in series “The Young Riders,” “Cold Case” and “L.A. Law.” He appeared in TV movies “The Haunting of Lisa,” “Going for the Gold: The Bill Johnson Story” and “Beggarman, Thief” as well as the special “You Are the Jury.”

Wayne Alan Northrop was born April 12, 1947, to Robert and Donna Jean Northrop. He was raised in Sumner, Wash., and graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in communications. After college, Northrop traveled Europe for several years, learning German along the way.

Upon his homecoming, Northrop enrolled in a local community college acting class, which helped launch his professional acting career.

Northrop married Herring (her TV credits also include “L.A. Law,” “Days of Our Lives” and “Port Charles”) in May 1981. The couple purchased a working cattle ranch in Raymond, Calif., and spent more than 30 years running it. Northrop, who was committed to wildlife and conservation causes, and Herring also acquired the Charles Miller House — the first and oldest house in Raymond — and transformed it into the Raymond Museum.

Northrop is survived by his wife, his two sons and stepmother Janet Northrop.

A preopening visit reveals a breathtaking restoration after the devastating fire.

By THOMAS ADAMSON

PARIS — Five years after a catastrophic fire reduced Notre Dame Cathedral to a smoldering shell, journalists got a first glimpse of the Gothic masterpiece’s fully restored interiors during a visit with French President Emmanuel Macron. The transformation is nothing short of breathtaking: Light dances across brilliant stone, gilded accents gleam anew and the iconic monument’s majesty is reborn. As of Sunday, visitors will once again marvel at the cathedral’s blend of history and craftsmanship.

Here’s a reporter’s-eye view:

Nave: Once darkened by soot and rubble, the nave now radiates a celestial brilliance. Visitors can see the true color of the cathedral’s walls: a pale Lutetian limestone — named after the Roman word for Paris, Lutecia — that glows under sunlight streaming through restored stained-glass windows. The newfound blond hues highlight the soaring Gothic columns and ribbed vaults, creating a bright and uplifting atmosphere. Restorers say it’s the first time in centuries the true stone has been exposed in this way.

The polished checkered marble floor, glistening underfoot, is so smooth it seems you could glide across it — communicating with the gilded, golden grille partition of the choir area.

Overhead, incandescent chandeliers hang majestically from each vaulted arch, stretching from west to east, casting a warm, golden light throughout the nave.

The meticulous restoration process involved cleaning more than 42,000 square meters of stone — an area equivalent to roughly six soccer fields — using innovative latex peels to strip away centuries of grime without causing damage.

Conservators uncovered mason marks etched by medieval builders — intimate traces of the artisans who shaped Notre Dame in the 12th and 13th centuries.

This gleaming transformation is a stark contrast to the wreckage of 2019, when the nave was strewn with charred debris.



CHRISTOPHE PETIT TESSON Associated Press

PEOPLE STROLL in Notre Dame Cathedral while French President Emmanuel Macron visits the restored interiors, which had been ravaged by a horrific fire.

Altar: The altar in the cathedral’s chancel carries a poignant symbol of the fire’s devastation. Nicolas Cous-tou’s Pietà, part of the Vœu de Louis XIII ensemble, survived largely unscathed, but molten lead from the blaze fused into the hand of Christ. Restorers chose to preserve this as a subtle yet powerful reminder of the tragedy.

CROSS IS RESTORED TO ITS FULL BRILLIANCE

Surrounding the altar, the intricate marquetry floor, long hidden under layers of dirt, has been pieced together from fragments recovered after the fire.

Nearby, the polished Cross of Glory, which famously glowed — literally — amid the flames, now stands restored to its full brilliance. Framed by the radiant blond stonework of the nave, the cross serves as a centerpiece of the cathedral’s rebirth.

Organ: Among the largest and most storied in France, the grand organ has undergone an intricate revival. Spared from the flames but coated in lead dust, its 8,000 pipes, ranging in size from that of a pen to over 33 feet tall, were painstakingly disassembled, cleaned and retuned. Over two years, this work was performed with precision in the cathedral’s silent, cavernous interior, where harmonization was achieved entirely by ear.

Now, the organ’s grandeur is unmistakable. Its towering wooden case, marked with carvings left by past craftsmen, gleams

under sunlight streaming through restored clerestory windows. Even in silence, it commands awe.

Chapels: The 29 chapels circling the nave and choir burst with color and detail previously dulled by dirt and neglect. Restorers revealed intricate murals, gilded stars on ceilings and vibrant motifs originally created under Eugène Viollet-le-Duc’s direction. Each chapel tells a unique story through its designs and themes.

The Chapel of St. Marcel stands out as a masterpiece, its mural of the saint’s relics vividly restored. Visitors are captivated by its radiant colors, producing an effect likened to the Sistine Chapel in Rome — a visual fireworks display.

In other chapels, traces of 19th century painters’ color tests, hidden in nooks, provide glimpses into their artistic process.

Transept crossing: The transept crossing, where the original spire collapsed, presented one of the restoration’s most formidable challenges. Above, soaring new vaults of Lutetian limestone replicate the medieval originals with remarkable precision.

Beneath the crossing, archaeologists uncovered a trove of history: fragments of Notre Dame’s medieval jubé, or choir screen, buried in the rubble. These intricately carved stones, some still bearing faint traces of polychrome paint, provide a rare glimpse into the cathedral’s vibrant 13th century decorative history.

Roof, spire and safety

measures: The roof draw gazes skyward, where medieval timber techniques have been faithfully re-created. Known as “the forest,” the intricate wooden framework remains hidden beneath the roofline, but glimpses into the rafters reveal the precision of both ancient and modern craftsmanship.

MONUMENT IS MUCH BETTER PROTECTED

Outside, the spire rises about 105 yards, faithfully replicating Viollet-le-Duc’s 19th century design. Clad in oak and lead, it stands crowned by a gilded rooster containing relics of St. Denis and St. Genevieve and a fragment of the Crown of Thorns, alongside a scroll listing contributors to the restoration.

The spire also honors the late Gen. Jean-Louis Georgelin, who oversaw the project until his death in 2023. His name is now etched at its base.

Notre Dame now features unseen state-of-the-art fire prevention systems to guard against future disasters. Thermal cameras monitor the roof, and a fine misting system, designed to extinguish flames at their source, is seamlessly integrated into the structure. Fireproof barriers divide the roof into compartments, preventing flames from spreading.

Reinforced water supply lines can deliver 21,188 cubic feet of water per hour, ensuring the cathedral is better protected than ever before.

Adamson writes for the Associated Press.