



NICOLE TUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A New Wedding Ritual in Syria
A groom-to-be in Aleppo. Syria is encouraging celebrants to use sparklers and flares to replace sometimes deadly gunfire. Page A12.

Far Outside the U.S., Kirk’s Memory Has Become a Political Tool

By JACK NICAS

LIMA, Peru — They bounded off buses by the dozens — families from the poor peripheries of Lima, Peru, lured into the city with a free ride, free lunch and free ticket to a city water park.

Some wore church clothes and carried Bibles, having heard there would be a memorial for an evangelical Christian like them. He was murdered in the United States for his beliefs, they were told, though few knew his name.

Many others were more confused. “Who’s Charlie Kirk?” asked Milagros Garcia, 56, sitting on the grass with a plate of chicken on Saturday at the Charlie Kirk memorial in Lima.

“I’ve never seen him,” she added when shown the event’s flier — a photo of Mr. Kirk in front of the Peruvian and American flags. Three women around her concurred.

Like Ms. Garcia, many attendees said they thought they were there for a rally for Lima’s mayor, Rafael López Aliaga, a right-wing

Public Tribute in Peru by a Mayor Seeking Trump’s Help

politician widely known as “Porky” who is one of the leading candidates to be Peru’s next president. They weren’t entirely wrong.

Mr. López Aliaga, 64, is trying to position himself as one of Latin America’s next leaders of the

modern global right, joining Brazil’s Jair Bolsonaro, Argentina’s Javier Milei and El Salvador’s Nayib Bukele. He announced the Kirk memorial at a far-right conference in Madrid last month and billed it as the only government-backed tribute to Mr. Kirk in Latin America.

The timing was also opportune. Mr. López Aliaga organized the memorial for the Trump-aligned activist just as he sought — and received — the Trump administration’s help in a high-stakes legal

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IAN C. BATES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Oakland, Calif., has struggled to remedy a garbage problem that spiked in 2020 and has not abated.

Illegal Dumping Transforms City Into ‘Trashland’

By SOUMYA KARLAMANGLA

OAKLAND, Calif. — It’s hard to stay calm when it’s your job to rid Oakland of trash.

Josh Rowan, the city’s acting public works director, becomes irate when he drives through the canyons of cardboard boxes, mattresses and busted appliances in Oakland.

“I stay furious, piping mad, dropping F-bombs kind of furious,” he said on a recent morning as he sifted through sour-smelling

Oakland Rid Streets of Junk. More Landed.

garbage beside a road. He said his anger fueled his work.

“I love this city, but what’s up with all of the trash?”

Oakland, long regarded as a scrappy, more affordable city across the bay from San Francisco, has struggled since the pandemic with crime, an enormous

deficit and a civic embarrassment when its mayor was recalled and federally indicted.

But the city’s residents are especially frustrated with illegal dumping these days. Makeshift, open-air landfills choke sidewalks, sully schoolyards and anger business owners across the city.

Illegal dumping plagues cities nationwide, but Oakland has one of the nation’s worst problems when accounting for the city’s smaller footprint and population

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Man Arrested In Connection To L.A. Blaze

By SHAWN HUBLER and JILL COWAN

LOS ANGELES — Federal authorities in Los Angeles said on Wednesday that they had arrested a 29-year-old man who appeared to be obsessed with fire in connection with the wildfire that devastated the wealthy coastal enclave of Pacific Palisades in January.

Officials said the man, Jonathan Rinderknecht of Melbourne, Fla., had intentionally set a fire on New Year’s Day on a hiking trail in the Santa Monica Mountains. That small blaze rekindled disastrously a week later into the Palisades fire, killing 12 people and destroying 6,837 structures, most of them homes.

In a federal complaint, prosecutors alleged that Mr. Rinderknecht, an Uber driver and a former resident of the Palisades, dropped off a passenger on New Year’s Eve and drove toward a popular trailhead known as Skull Rock.

He then parked, tried to call a former friend and walked up the trail, taking videos with an iPhone and listening on YouTube to a French rap video featuring a character setting things on fire. Then, federal authorities alleged, he set a fire himself with an open flame and called 911 to report it, but did not initially get through because he could not get cell service. As firefighters rushed to the scene,

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ISRAEL AND HAMAS HAVE ELUSIVE DEAL ON GAZA HOSTAGES

An Exchange for Palestinian Prisoners — Trump Says Troops Will Pull Back

This article is by David E. Sanger, Ephrat Livni and Adam Rasgon.

After months of deadlock, Israel and Hamas reached an agreement for the release of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, a long-awaited breakthrough that could point toward an end to the two-year war in Gaza.

President Trump, who helped broker the deal, announced on social media on Wednesday night that both sides had agreed to the first phase of his plan, including that Israel would pull back their troops to an agreed upon line. Qatar, one of the countries helping negotiate, and Hamas also indicated in statements that the deal would allow for the entry of aid into Gaza.

The details of the deal were not publicly released, including the timing and specifics of the exchange, as well as the line of withdrawal. But one official familiar with the details said the exchange was expected as soon as this weekend.

“This is a GREAT Day for the Arab and Muslim World, Israel, all surrounding Nations, and the United States of America, and we thank the mediators from Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey, who worked with us to make this Historic and Unprecedented Event happen,” Mr. Trump said on Truth Social.

While Israel and Hamas had agreed to an exchange, it was still not clear whether the war in Gaza would end. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel has demanded that Hamas disarm, which the militant group has publicly rejected. Statements on the deal from Hamas, Israel, Mr. Trump, and Qatar made no mention of Hamas’s arms. And Israel, in its initial statements, did not

mention a troop pullback.

Mr. Netanyahu issued a statement saying he would convene his government on Thursday to sign off on the agreement, calling it a “great day for Israel.”

He thanked Mr. Trump but did not provide details.

Hamas in its statement called on Mr. Trump, guarantors to the agreement and others to compel Israel “to fully implement the agreement’s requirements and not allow it to evade or delay.”

Last month, Mr. Trump unveiled a 20-point plan to end the war and free the remaining hostages. Israel believes that about 20 hostages are still alive in Gaza, and has been seeking the remains of about 25 others.

It was not immediately clear on Wednesday night which elements of the plan had been adopted and which remained unresolved.

Under the president’s proposal, the hostages would be exchanged for 250 Palestinian prisoners serving life sentences and 1,700 Gazans jailed by Israel during the war. For every hostage whose remains are released, Israel would also release the remains of 15 Gazans.

After the deal was announced in the early hours of the Middle East morning, all the main television channels in Israel were broadcasting live, though they usually shut down for the night around midnight.

Tearful relatives of hostages and former hostages were posting emotional and joyful videos on social media. “That’s it, it’s over!” Meirav Gilboa-Dalal, the mother of hostage Guy Gilboa Dallal, 24, told Channel 12 News as family members cheered in the background.

The Hostages and Missing

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M. SCOTT BRAUER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Doug Whitney carries a mutation that often leads to early death.

He Escaped Alzheimer’s Fate. Scientists Want to Know How.

By PAM BELLUCK

ST. LOUIS — Before dawn on a March morning, Doug Whitney walked into a medical center 2,000 miles from home, about to transform from a mild-mannered, bespectacled retiree into a superhuman research subject.

First, a doctor inserted a needle into his back to extract cerebral spinal fluid — “liquid gold,” a research nurse called it for the valuable biological information it contains. Then, the nurse took a sample of his skin cells. After that came an injection of a radioactive tracer followed by a brain scan requiring him to lie still for 30 minutes with a thermoplastic mask over his face. Then, another tracer injection and another brain scan.

Focusing on One Man to Unlock Answers

During his three-day visit to the center, at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, he also had cognitive assessments, neurological evaluations and blood draws that extracted multiple tubes for analysis.

For 14 years now, Mr. Whitney has been the one-person focus of exceptionally detailed scientific investigation, for which he travels periodically to St. Louis from his home in Port Orchard, Wash. It is not because he is ill. It is because he was supposed to be ill.

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At 102, Stretching Longevity
For decades, Charlotte Chopin has taught yoga. The bonds she’s formed have been key to her well-being. PAGE A4

Macron Rejects Snap Elections
The French president said he’d name another prime minister in hopes of getting a budget passed soon. PAGE A6

NATIONAL A13-21

Confederate Statues Rise
A 1.5-acre private park in North Carolina, Valor Memorial, has become a destination for statues that were removed from public spaces. PAGE A13

Comey Pleads Not Guilty
The former F.B.I. director will move to dismiss a case that was brought after pressure from the president. PAGE A16

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Football With a Bit More Kick
A subtle N.F.L. rule change is benefiting field-goal units, with even 70-yarders seemingly within reach. PAGE B6



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Fantastic Looks in Paris
Fashion Week had alien masks, an octopus-friendly outfit and some perfectly wearable clothes, too. PAGE D6

Left-Leaning, and Edgy Too
The podcast “TrueAnon,” has won fans by tackling topics like the Jeffrey Epstein case and the opioid crisis. PAGE D1

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Sexy A.I. Companions
In July, Elon Musk’s artificial intelligence company, xAI, introduced two sexually explicit chatbots, pushing a new version of intimacy. Rivals have shied away from such products. PAGE B1

Visa Fees May Strain Schools
Higher education leaders and public-school superintendents in the United States say they depend on skilled foreign workers to fill critical roles, especially in STEM and medicine. PAGE B1

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Emily Bazelon PAGE A22



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Shy Member of Kennedy Clan
Joan Kennedy, who basked and struggled in the political glare while married to Edward M. Kennedy, and wrestled with alcoholism, was 89. PAGE B12

