



ALEX WELSH
SARA SOLIS, flanked by children Hugo and Naomi, holds a picture of her son Mario, who was found dead in a Riverside County jail in 2022.

A DEADLY JAIL SYSTEM SEES ITS DEADLIEST YEAR

Riverside County facilities reported their highest detainee fatality count in decades in 2022, including multiple suicides

By Christopher Damien



KRISTIAN THACKER
A MEMORIAL for Alicia Upton in her mother's home in West Virginia. Upton died by suicide in a Riverside County jail cell.

Alicia Upton paced the concrete floor of her jail cell. She looked around the cramped quarters. Then she pressed the alert button on an intercom attached to the wall.

"What is your emergency?" responded a voice, captured on video footage from a camera in the cell. It was a deputy about 50 feet away, in the control room of the women's mental health unit where Upton, 21, was being held.

"It's not an emergency, but —" she began, then the deputy cut off the call before she could finish. Charged with a misdemeanor, Upton was awaiting a court-ordered evaluation to determine whether she was competent to stand trial.

She took a few more listless steps, the video shows. She paused beneath a buzzing fluorescent light, then picked up a white bedsheet and said, "It's time to hang myself."

[See Riverside, A6]

CAMINOS DEL SOUTHWEST

Restaurateurs embrace divergent views

Two cousins with political differences lament divisive climate in U.S.

GUSTAVO ARELLANO

I left Las Vegas for home on a Tuesday morning, tired and optimistic after nearly a week on the road. I took so many notes talking to Latinos about their hopes and fears in this election year that I filled up my legal pad. So many quotes, so many anecdotes — and there was one more, delicious stop left.

For 87 years, Mitla Cafe in San Bernardino has served Cal-Mex classics such as chile colorado and huevos rancheros. It is best known for its hard-shell tacos: ground beef mixed with mashed potatoes, topped with a blizzard of orange cheese, green lettuce and red tomatoes, held together by a freshly fried shell that shines like an ingot.

The restaurant is on the old Route 66, and travelers regularly stopped by



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times
"I'M AFRAID to talk politics" publicly, said Steven Oquendo, who runs San Bernardino's Mitla Cafe with his cousin Michael Montaña.

Campaigns of Latino, Asian candidates may reshape Eastside

Voters have shown a willingness to cross racial or ethnic lines, one academic says.

By DAVID ZAHNISER

The text message that showed up on the phones of Eastside voters last month began with a warning: Forty years of Latino political representation is under threat.

The ad from Los Angeles City Councilmember Kevin de León's reelection campaign also featured a grainy, unflattering photo of his opponent, tenant rights attorney Ysabel Jurado.

"We need to protect Latino voices," the message said, "and re-elect Kevin de León for city council."

Those words brought into public view an issue whispered about for months: Voters in the 14th District, which includes heavily Mexican American neighborhoods such as

Boyle Heights and El Sereno, could soon elect a council member who is not Latino for the first time since 1985.

Jurado, 34, has been looking to make history by becoming the first Filipino American on the council. She has spent much of the campaign slamming De León over his participation in a secretly recorded conversation punctuated by crude and racist remarks.

That scandal left De León so politically weakened that two Latino state Assembly members, Wendy Carrillo and Miguel Santiago, challenged him for his council seat. But they lost in the March primary, and now their Assembly seats are up for grabs.

That chain of events could reshape the political landscape of the Eastside, the birthplace of Chicano activism in L.A.

In Tuesday's election, Asian Pacific Islander candidates are running against [See Eastside, A12]

Trump's culture of retribution seeps into U.S.

Moved by his words, his followers threaten teachers, librarians and election workers.

By JEFFREY FLEISHMAN

After a video went on social media portraying him as a radical groomer endangering children with sexually explicit books, Frank Strong, a Texas teacher, received threats and became a target in a disquieting and toxic culture of rage and retribution shaped, he believes, by nearly a decade of Donald Trump's political hold on the American imagination.

"It has a chilling effect," Strong, a high school English teacher, said of the backlash he has endured in fighting to prevent schools from banning books on race and sexual identity. "I don't

know who these people are or what they're capable of. This ugliness and sense of intimidation is a Trump era thing. There's a real danger of it accelerating."

Librarians are harassed, teachers vilified, election workers threatened. Immigrants are demonized and armed groups march outside state capitols. Even meteorologists are targeted in conspiracy theories.

"One election worker told me, 'I can't go to the grocery store without being seen as a pariah,'" Tammy Patrick, chief executive officer for programs at the National Assn. of Election Officials, said of the contempt Trump's supporters have for the election system since he lost in 2020. "Another had to take their name off the mailbox at their family farm in Wisconsin because they feared threats from people [See Revenge, A8]

Israel conducts raid in Syria

Military says it seized senior Hezbollah operative in its first known ground foray into the country. **WORLD, A3**

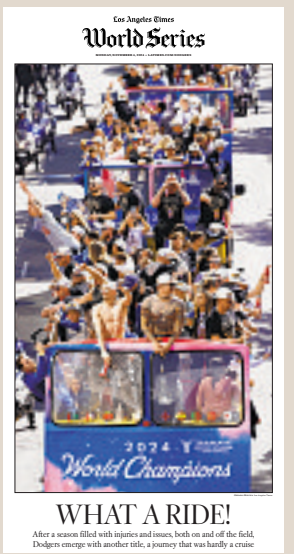
Repeat arrests raise questions

An L.A. man is accused in a string of robberies despite being fitted with a GPS ankle monitor. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather
Lots of sunshine.
L.A. Basin: 75/52. **B5**

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