

# Ohtani assistant accused of theft

Now-fired interpreter allegedly stole Dodger superstar's money to place bets with a suspected bookmaker.

By GUSTAVO ARELLANO, ADAM ELMAHREK, NATHAN FENNO AND PAUL PRINGLE

Representatives of Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani on Wednesday accused his interpreter of engaging in a “massive theft” of the ballplayer’s funds to place bets with an allegedly illegal bookmaker who is the target of a federal investigation.

Lawyers for Ohtani made that claim after The Times learned that Ohtani’s name had surfaced in the investigation of Mathew Bowyer, an Orange County resident. Ohtani’s representatives looked into the actions of the interpreter, Ippei Mizuhara, in response to The Times’ queries, a source close to the matter said. Two sources told the newspaper that the money involved was in the millions of dollars.

In a statement, the West Hollywood law firm Berk Brettler said, “In the course of responding to recent media inquiries, we discovered that Shohei has been the victim of a massive theft and we are turning the matter over to the authorities.”

Attempts to reach Mizuhara were unsuccessful. Mizuhara placed bets with Bowyer, according to the sources, who requested anonymity to share sensitive information.

The Dodgers on Wednesday fired Mizuhara, a team spokesman said.

One of the sources said that Mizuhara was not truthful when asked about The Times’ inquiries. He was still interpreting for Ohtani on Wednesday in Seoul.

Ohtani, a global sensation who signed a record 10-year, \$700-million contract with the Dodgers in December after playing six years with the Angels, could not be reached for comment. He is with the Dodgers in Seoul for a season-opening series against the San Diego Padres.

[See Ohtani, A6]



LEE JIN-MAN Associated Press

**DODGERS** designated hitter Shohei Ohtani takes the field in Seoul on Wednesday for the team’s season opener. His interpreter is accused of stealing money from him to place bets with an alleged bookmaker.

# A neighbor missing, home taken over

Sherman Oaks residents were suspicious of an estate ‘trustee.’ What investigators found were a web of lies, a ‘ruthless’ fraudster.

By BRITTNY MEJIA

Not much happens on Kingswood Road without the neighbors noticing.

The one-block street in Sherman Oaks ends in a cul-de-sac, and the people who live in the multimillion-dollar homes along it know one another’s dogs, vehicles and daily routines.

So when they didn’t see Charles Wilding Jr., a shy, single man, for several months in the fall of 2020, neighbors became concerned. And those worries only intensified when a bubbly young redhead named Caroline Herrling installed herself in Wilding’s house in the 3800 block and began a remodel.

“It was very rare to see anybody at the house,” said Roger Stanard, who has lived next door to Wilding since 2008. “I didn’t know what to make of her.”

The gossip along the street grew so intense that Herrling circulated a letter reassuring everyone that Wilding was fine. She identified herself as the trustee of the estate and said, “great changes are underway, with the goal of bringing the property to code.”

“While the property is being re- [See Fraud, A9]



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

**POSTAL INSPECTOR** Lyndon Versoza, left, and LAPD detective supervisor Mark O’Donnell helped crack the bizarre case.

**SCAM AND SUICIDE:** A man killed himself after his Encino home was fraudulently sold. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

# AI a job killer — and a job creator

Tech sector has been roiled by layoffs, but opportunities may be ahead. ‘We’re in an almost gold rush.’

By SAMANTHA MASUNAGA AND DON LEE

For the thousands of tech workers recently laid off in California and across the country, the future may not be as bleak as it looks right now: Many are likely to retrain fairly quickly for new jobs in the burgeoning field of artificial intelligence.

The massive rounds of layoffs at tech giants and many smaller companies were largely the result of stricter investor demands — what managers saw as overhiring during the pandemic and a stock market that rewarded those personnel cuts.

But the industry also was clearing the way to focus on



MICHAEL OWEN BAKER



SEAN HAYES

**ALISSA MARR**, above, was laid off. Consultant Jenn Longnion, top, sees the sector evolving.

AI, which is expected to revolutionize computer-related technology and work in the years ahead — even as it displaces jobs, previously handled by humans, in areas as varied as coding and background acting.

Not only is AI taking over more standard computer programming once done entirely by humans, it is also starting to spur waves of new applications — and with them, jobs, both tech and non-tech, in a wide range of industries, including in Southern California.

“What we’re seeing is a lot of tech companies are actually monetizing the AI solution,” said Jenn Longnion, the Los Angeles-based founder of See & Free Consulting, which helps businesses grow sustainably. “They’ve had AI for a very long time. But they’re finding ways now to monetize that and actually promote that and sell that as a solution to other businesses. ... Every industry is now having [See Tech, A11]

## Trump defends Jan. 6 rioters

Former president is making Capitol attack a cornerstone of his bid to return to White House. **NATION, A4**

## Amazon’s plastic fattens landfills

A new CalPIRG report reveals that almost no packaging from online retailer gets recycled. **BUSINESS, A10**

## Boost for state’s river-flow goals

A judge backs regulators’ plan to reduce water diversions from the San Joaquin delta region. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

**Weather**  
Afternoon sun.  
L.A. Basin: 72/54. **B6**

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# Texas immigration law is in limbo again after whiplash court rulings

The White House is baffled and Mexico is outraged. Resolution may require a second trip to the high court.

By DAVID G. SAVAGE AND PATRICK J. McDONNELL

**WASHINGTON** — The Texas immigration law that would empower the police to arrest people suspected of entering the U.S. illegally is on hold again while a different panel of the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals decides how to proceed.

The back-and-forth decisions, or nondecisions, from the appeals court have confounded the Biden administration and the Supreme Court, alarmed immigrant-rights advocates and

sparked outrage from the Mexican government.

It’s unclear whether or when the Texas law will go into effect. And the outcome will remain in doubt until the case makes a second trip to the Supreme Court.

At issue is the far-reaching question of whether Texas and other red states may adopt and enforce their own immigration laws. GOP Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has championed the new and more aggressive approach to immigration enforcement, insisting the state must take action because of what he calls lax federal enforcement by the Democratic administration.

But doing so would require the Supreme Court to reverse course on decades of rulings that say the federal government, not the state, has the power to enforce the [See Texas, A6]



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