



THIS MANSION drew complaints from neighbors on Mulholland Drive. Its owner has apologized, and painters have covered the graffiti.

Photographs by ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

# A billionaire’s son and his graffiti-scarred mansions

Producer’s Hollywood Hills estates are vandalized shells with frustrated neighbors

BY NATHAN SOLIS

With its shattered windows and cartoonish graffiti, the mansion on Mulholland Drive sits like a gaping wound in the Hollywood Hills.

Broken glass spills out onto the narrow hillside road where tourist buses and others slow down to gawk at the mansion that sits like a colorful disaster.

“We’ve become known for the graffiti mansion,” said a neighbor, who asked for anonymity over privacy concerns. “It’s so embarrassing to have this in the heart of the Hollywood Hills.”

The owner of the mansion issued a formal apology Thursday to his neighbors and the city of Los Angeles after The Times contacted his attorney about the neighbors’ complaints. The Mulholland Drive home is



NEIGHBORS are skeptical that recent efforts to fence the property, board up windows and paint over graffiti-covered walls will resolve ongoing issues.

one of two homes owned by 40-year-old TV and film producer John Powers Middleton.

“What’s happened to the two properties I own is unacceptable, and no matter what caused it, I own the houses,” Middleton said in his first statement since his homes gained national attention. “Given the persistence of the numerous trespassers, it’s a struggle.”

He explained that his private security and property managers at his properties were overwhelmed by trespassers and vandals. In recent weeks, vandals descended on the Hollywood Hills to leave their mark with fresh taggings on the mansions, much to the dismay of his neighbors.

The home has been sitting empty for years, according to neighbors, and seems to have been abandoned.

## Deputies allegedly did dirty work for mogul

Feds accuse crypto exchange operator of ordering unlawful searches and arrests.

BY KERI BLAKINGER AND BRITTNY MEJIA

Federal prosecutors call him “The Godfather,” and like the fictional mafia boss, he allegedly had cops on the payroll to do his criminal bidding.

Adam Iza, who ran a cryptocurrency trading platform known as Zort, allegedly paid several Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies — sometimes tens of thousands of dollars — to perform unlawful searches and arrests as part of an extortion scheme, according to a federal criminal complaint unsealed this week.

Iza hid millions of dollars from tax collectors by failing to report income and funneling money through shell companies with co-conspirators, according to the complaint. He allegedly spent the funds on numerous luxury vehicles, including a Lamborghini Aventador and a Rolls-Royce Phantom, nearly a million in rent for a Bel Air mansion and around \$64,000 on cosmetic surgery to extend the length of his legs.

Iza stands accused of conspiracy against rights and evasion of tax assessments. Authorities arrested him on Sept. 23, according to federal court documents. Records show he is ordered to appear before a judge on Oct. 8.

“Things aren’t what they [See Crypto, A8]

## Israel says it struck at heart of Hezbollah

Powerful bombs hit what officials say is the militant group’s base of operations.

BY NABIH BULOS AND LAURA KING

BEIRUT — Offering no hint of respite in its head-on confrontation with Hezbollah, Israel on Friday staged a deadly bombing raid in a crowded Beirut district, aiming to destroy the militant group’s subterranean headquarters and kill its top leader.

The Israeli military called it a “precise strike” targeting the concealed headquarters of Hezbollah.

The powerful blasts — around nine or 10 in quick succession — shook windows across the city, destroyed four buildings and left a plume of smoke rising over the city. Nearby apartment buildings were engulfed in flames and craters could be seen on nearby roads.

It was the largest strike on the Lebanese capital since hostilities erupted between Israel and Hezbollah nearly a year ago, intensifying a conflict that already threatens to spiral out of control.

[See Hezbollah, A4]



JENNIFER S. ALTMAN For The Times

### ACTOR MAGGIE SMITH DIES

The Oscar, Tony and Emmy award winner, best known recently for “Downton Abbey” and the “Harry Potter” films, was 89. OBITUARIES, B2

### Hurricane kills 40 in 4 states

Helene leaves massive path of destruction across southeastern U.S. NATION, A5

**Weather**  
Morning clouds.  
L.A. Basin: 80/58. B3

### Vindication for Dodgers leader

Division title is latest triumph for manager Dave Roberts, says Bill Plaschke. SPORTS, B12



## Harris helped revolutionize approach to child trafficking

BY MACKENZIE MAYS

SACRAMENTO — Twenty years ago, freshly elected as San Francisco’s district attorney, Kamala Harris urged California lawmakers to crack down on child sex trafficking and warned that her fellow prosecutors had gotten it all wrong.

Minors should not be arrested as “child prostitutes” and charged for their own abuse, she said, but deserved to be treated as victims who needed support.

In one of her first acts as an elected official, Harris sponsored a bill signed into law by Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger that increased penalties for adults who solicited sex from minors and was considered.

[See Harris, A6]



DAMIAN DOVARGANES Associated Press

AS A PROSECUTOR, Kamala Harris was an early leader in the push to transform how the justice system handles sex-trafficked children, championing policies that treated them as victims, not criminals.



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