

Jasmine Cuenco

From: Molly Manoukian
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2021 7:58 AM
To: Lynn; Phyllis Redmond
Subject: Fwd: Monday Morning Memo for January 25, 2021

This is a very good news resource for criminal law
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Courts & Rulings

Sementilli judge torpedoed LADA's scheme to go easy on accused black widow

A Toronto family is breathing easier after a Los Angeles judge torpedoed a gambit from the city's new soft-on-crime district attorney to cut an alleged black widow sentencing slack. Superior Court Judge Ronald Coen refused to dismiss the special circumstance clause that can potentially send a convicted felon to prison for life without the possibility of parole.

[Toronto Sun](#)

Judge wrestles with Oakland A's ballpark environmental review fast-track

A coalition of trade groups looking to stall construction of a new Oakland A's ballpark near the Port of Oakland argued in virtual court on Thursday that Governor Gavin Newsom doesn't have the authority to fast-track the project. "Once the deadline came and went, the governor lost the authority to certify this project - period," said attorney Ron Van Buskirk, who represents groups including the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association, California Trucking Association and Schnitzer Steel Industries.

[Courthouse News Service](#)

Hate crime conviction thrown out against California man who attacked African American grocery store employee

A state appeals court has thrown out a violation of civil rights conviction and hate crimes enhancement for a man who carried out an unprovoked attack on an African American employee at a Laguna Beach grocery store. Fernando Ramirez admitted in explicit terms that he hated Black people and punched the employee because he was Black, but the appeals court found those comments were improperly obtained by police after Ramirez received his Miranda advisement and invoked his right to an attorney.

[East Bay Times](#)

Bringing a case to arbitration should be easier following recent Ninth Circuit decision

A plaintiff may not avoid arbitration and manufacture appellate jurisdiction simply by voluntarily dismissing his claims, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals recently decided. In doing so, the court stated that an earlier Ninth Circuit decision reaching the opposite conclusion had been effectively overruled by intervening U.S. Supreme Court precedent. The Ninth Circuit's new ruling will make it easier for parties seeking to enforce arbitration agreements.

[Best Best & Krieger](#)

Ninth Circuit hears lawsuit over 'ghost guns' as Pasadena police record uptick in seizures

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals recently heard arguments in a lawsuit involving 21 states, including California, hoping to block a plan that would transfer the regulation of ghost guns from the State Department to the Department of Commerce. Ghost guns are unserialized and unregistered guns that can be cobbled together from different parts or 3D printed.

[Pasadena Now](#)

Judge allows attorneys to look into sexual backgrounds of San Fernando wrestling abuse victims

Attorneys for the Boys and Girls Club of San Fernando can conduct deposition inquiries into the sexual backgrounds of multiple male and female plaintiffs who sued the club and Los Angeles Unified, alleging they were sexually abused due to the actions of a former wrestling coach, a judge ruled.

[City News Service](#)

Judge refuses to order Amazon to put Parler back online

Parler - the social media platform favored by conservatives and many in the insurrectionist mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol - will remain offline for now,

after a federal judge ruled Amazon was under no obligation to continue to host the social media app after it let users post violent content leading up to and during the Jan. 6 riot.

[Courthouse News Service](#)

Judge who ordered reunification of separated families promoted to lead California court

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw - who ordered former President Donald Trump's administration to reunite thousands of families it separated under the "zero tolerance" immigration policy at the U.S.-Mexico border - was promoted to Chief Judge of the Southern District of California Thursday.

[Courthouse News Service](#)

COVID-19 & Justice System

Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor announces court mourns Covid-19 deaths of two court employees this month

Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor announced this evening the deaths of two members of the Court's family - a traffic clerk and a court interpreter - who died this month amid the COVID-19 surge in Los Angeles County. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of two dedicated court employees during this devastating pandemic," Presiding Judge Taylor said.

[LA Superior Court News Release](#)

LA Courts criticized for COVID-19 policies, interpreter's death

The nonprofit Court Watch Los Angeles on Friday said Los Angeles Superior Court's lax COVID-19 safety protocols led to an interpreter dying from the virus, alleging his death is the result of "incoherent" COVID-19 policies that punish employees for attempting to quarantine after a possible exposure.

[Law360](#)

Eviction cases in California projected to double

California courts are bracing for eviction cases to double over the next year as pandemic-related financial woes deepen for thousands of renters across the state. Landlords are expected to file 240,000 new eviction cases - twice what occurs in a typical year, according to estimates by state court officials. The projection takes into account the looming expiration of state eviction protections, which end in late January.

[Los Angeles Times](#)

Justice delayed: Courts overwhelmed by pandemic backlog

Barbara Franklin doesn't have long to live. The 91-year-old woman from Riverside County is suffering from mesothelioma, a terminal cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. For years, her sons and husband would come home from their auto parts dealership covered in dust from grinding down asbestos-lined brakes.

[CalMatters](#)

ADDA Lawsuit

Kern DA Zimmer announces support of lawsuit against Los Angeles DA

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer on Tuesday said she supports a lawsuit filed against Los Angeles DA George Gascon for policies she said harm crime victims and will have impacts in Kern and other counties. In a news release, Zimmer said she supports an amicus brief filed Tuesday by the California District Attorney's Association that in turn supports a lawsuit brought against Gascon by the Los Angeles Association of Deputy District Attorneys.

[KGET](#)

LA County DA Gascón gets backing from 65 current and former elected prosecutors

Sixty-five current and former elected prosecutors from across the nation filed a legal brief on Friday, Jan. 15, in support of Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón and his authority to enact new legal policies. The district attorneys and attorneys general - including former Los Angeles County DAs Gil Garcetti and Ira Reiner - are listed in the friend-of-the-court brief for a civil case.

[San Gabriel Valley Tribune](#)

Prosecutors from all over U.S. support District Attorney Gascón against attempt to shut down LA DA's promised justice reforms

On November 3, 2020, long time cop, and former San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón, challenged incumbent Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey, who was going for a third term, for the job of running the nation's largest DA's office. During the race, Gascón positioned himself clearly as a strong reformer, and made a string of campaign promises outlining what reforms he would make first if he won.

[Witness LA](#)

D.A. Gascón disclaims duty, under statutes, to allege priors

Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón, battling to stave off the humiliation of a court decision proclaiming unlawful his edict on Day One of his administration that no prior convictions are to be alleged under the Three Strikes Law, has contended in opposition to the Association of Deputy District Attorneys' application for a preliminary injunction that the word "shall" in the relevant statutes does not create a mandatory duty.

[Metropolitan News-Enterprise](#)

LA District Attorney's Office

LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger wants parole denied for convicted child rapist

Hours after FOX 11 spoke with two siblings who are rape survivors, Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger is taking action to make sure the suspect who attacked the two victims won't be eligible for parole. On Wednesday, FOX 11 spoke with a woman who was raped and assaulted when she was six years old and her adult-aged brother, who was targeted by the same suspect when he was eight.

[Fox11](#)

LA District Attorney criticized by Fresno County DA over new directives

Fresno County's top prosecutor has penned a letter to her counterpart in Los Angeles County, telling him that a series of controversial directives he issued upon taking office last month are "extreme" and "already wreaking havoc on crime victims." The letter, dated Monday, is the second that George Gascon has been sent in recent weeks in which a district attorney from another county has refused to grant him jurisdiction in cases involving defendants accused of committing crimes in the counties they represent.

[Spectrum News1](#)

Under new DA, alleged child decapitator, deputy ambusher would be eligible for parole in 20 years

Under reforms from new Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón, the suspects in two cases involving the decapitation of two kids, and the shooting ambush of two deputies, will both be eligible for parole after serving 20 years in prison, if convicted. In December 2020, 34-year-old Maurice Taylor was charged with the murder and decapitation of two of his children, ages 13 and 12, inside the family's Lancaster home.

[Fox11](#)

Families of victims say Gascon's rollback of initial policies aren't enough (Video)

Crime victims and many in the police community have criticized new LA County District Attorney George Gascon's changes, which eliminated certain sentencing enhancements that add years to prison terms. Lolita Lopez reports for the NBC4 News on Friday, Jan. 15, 2021.

[NBC4](#)

George Gascón's new policy creates County rift

LA County District Attorney George Gascón is facing more legal pushback over his controversial policies. This time, a judge is allowing the San Diego County DA to reclaim jurisdiction from Gascón over several charges in a deadly crime spree in 2019. Two people were killed including an L.A. County Sheriff's Deputy. LA Times Reporter James Queally joined us with the story.

[Los Angeles Times](#)

Los Angeles County's new controversial D.A. says 'the justice reform movement gains an ally in' the 'White House'

Minutes before Joe Biden was sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on Wednesday, Los Angeles County's new controversial progressive district attorney expressed solidarity with the new administration on social media. "Today, the justice reform movement gains an ally in [the] White House," tweeted L.A. County District Attorney George Gascón.

[The Daily Wire](#)

Blacknell is not to become a Gascón advisor; Trujillo gets post she was expected to fill

The expected switch-over of Los Angeles Deputy Public Defender Tiffany Townend Blacknell to the District Attorney's Office as community relations director is not occurring, with Deputy District Attorney Mario Trujillo, instead assuming the role of "community and government affairs liaison."

[Metropolitan News-Enterprise](#)

Prosecutors

Proud Boys organizer Joseph Biggs charged in deadly Capitol riots

A self-described organizer for the Proud Boys, an extremist group with ties to white nationalism, was charged Wednesday in connection with the deadly Capitol riots, where federal authorities said Joseph Biggs allegedly encouraged fellow extremists. In court documents, federal prosecutors claimed that Biggs, 37, began urging fellow members in December to join the Jan. 6 demonstration in Washington.

[USA Today](#)

9 San Diego inmates charged in unemployment benefits fraud scheme

Nine men in San Diego County are facing felony charges stemming from a statewide unemployment fraud scandal among California prison and jail inmates, the District Attorney's Office announced Thursday. The defendants, who allegedly committed the fraud between June and September of last year, were assigned to a program in San Diego allowing qualified state prison inmates to serve the final months of their sentences in a halfway house setting.

[City News Service](#)

Man charged after allegedly dragging and raping homeless woman who later died in Pomona

A homeless man has been charged after allegedly dragging and raping a homeless woman who appeared to be sick and later died in Pomona, officials announced Tuesday. Jerome Perrin, 42, was charged with one count each of kidnapping to commit rape, rape of an unconscious or asleep person, oral copulation of an unconscious or asleep person and sexual penetration of an unconscious or asleep person, according to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.

[KTLA5](#)

Policy / Legal Issues

LAPD may soon remove most officers from regional intelligence center (Video)

The LAPD may soon be removing most of its officers from a regional intelligence center designed to help detect terrorism and other violent acts before they happen. The NBC4 I-Team's Eric Leonard reports for the NBC4 News at 5 p.m. on Monday Jan. 18, 2021.

[NBC4](#)

Bakersfield ICE critic who alleges retaliation for free speech allowed to sue over detention

An undocumented immigrant activist who was jailed after publicly reading a poem critical of Trump administration policies can sue the government for retaliation, a federal appeals court ruled Thursday. Jose Bello, now 23, was brought to the United States by his family from Mexico at age 3 and is now a college student and farmworker in Bakersfield.

[San Francisco Chronicle](#)

Battle over progressive prosecuting is just beginning

In a few months, we will see Yolo County potentially step back into the fray on the future of prosecution. A candidate is emerging who will push for progressive reforms. There will be opposition either in the person of current four-time DA Jeff Reisig or, if he does not seek a fifth term, one of his many surrogates.

[The Davis Vanguard](#)

Attorneys argue over scope of police records law before appellate court panel

Attorneys on Thursday made their final arguments to the appellate court tasked with deciding whether a landmark police records law applies to incidents before the law went into effect. Senate Bill 1421, the law in debate, made certain police misconduct records open to the public as of Jan. 1, 2019. The legislation was passed amid an ongoing discussion about transparency in law enforcement and holding officers accountable.

[Ventura County Star](#)

Los Angeles County / City

Pursuit driver suspected of having gun, Molotov cocktails in custody following standoff in Paramount

A pursuit driver suspected of being armed with a gun and Molotov cocktails was taken into custody following a standoff with authorities in the Paramount area Thursday morning. The pursuit started about 7:45 a.m. in the Bellflower area near Lakewood Boulevard and Walnut Street, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Sgt. Salles said.

[KTLA5](#)

Coroner's inquest upholds homicide death of 18-year-old Andres Guardado by deputy

A coroner's office inquest into the death of 18-year-old Andres Guardado, who was fatally shot by a sheriff's deputy in Gardena, upheld a previous conclusion by the office that his death was a homicide, officials announced Friday. The inquest - the first conducted in Los Angeles County in more than 30 years - found that Guardado's "manner of death was by the hands of another person other than by accident," wrote retired California Court of Appeals Justice Candace D. Cooper, who oversaw the probe.

[City News Service](#)

What could L.A.'s dramatic budget shortfall mean for Angelenos?

City leaders struggling with a projected pandemic-fueled budget shortfall of \$675 million this week took steps to bridge the gap by reaching agreements with a pair of public employee unions. On Tuesday, a deal was announced to defer two different 2 percent raises - one slated for this month, the other for June - with the Coalition of L.A. City Unions.

[Los Angeles Magazine](#)

Solving LAPD budget woes get trickier after officer pay raises kick in

Pay raises for Los Angeles police officers went into effect Sunday, despite threats from city officials that refusal to delay the pay spike could result in hundreds more layoffs for a department that already was downsized in 2020. Rank-and-file LAPD officers will see a 3.25% pay increase starting with their next paychecks, according to their union, the Los Angeles Police Protective League.

[Los Angeles Daily News](#)

Public Safety / Crime

Los Angeles' relaxed approach to crime; police budget cuts, explained - Steve Cooley (Video)

Los Angeles' new District Attorney George Gascon is changing the county's criminal justice system. Gascon plans on excusing minor misdemeanors, dismissing past offenses, reducing incarceration rates, halting sentence enhancements, and more. My guest today is Steve Cooley. He is the former D.A. of Los Angeles. Today he discusses L.A.'s new approach to crime, police budget cuts, and the ideology behind defunding the police.

[California Insider - The Epoch Times](#)

Pacoima mom's suspected killer had been deported 10 times, ICE says

The family of 35-year-old Karen Ruiz, who authorities say was killed by her ex-boyfriend in front of her 3-year-old daughter in Pacoima, is heartbroken and outraged by the woman's death. They say that the tragedy that occurred on Jan. 6 could have been prevented if Herbert Nixon Flores, who allegedly committed the slaying, had not been released after being arrested for domestic abuse.

[NBC4](#)

LAPD reports a sharp increase in violent crime. So what's behind it?

The new year is off to a deadly start, according to the Los Angeles Police Department. South Los Angeles suffered 59 shootings in the first 14 days of 2021, says LAPD Chief Michel Moore. "59 shooting victims compared to 7 last year," he announced in a tweet calling out the violence. The 24 homicides and 68 shootings the city of Los Angeles saw in the first half of January were more than double the number from the same time last year.

[Los Angeles Magazine](#)

Capitol Riots

Lawyer is arrested in Capitol assault after Facebook bragging

A Georgia lawyer who was arrested Friday for alleged participation in the U.S. Capitol riot Jan. 6 had bragged on Facebook about taking control of the Capitol "in a hand to hand hostile takeover," prosecutors say. Lawyer William McCall Calhoun Jr., identified as McCall Calhoun in previous coverage, said he was among the first couple hundred people to rush inside the Capitol, according to an affidavit posted by WUSA 9.

[ABA Journal](#)

A reporter's video from inside the Capitol siege (Video)

On January 6th, 2021, Luke Mogelson followed Trump supporters as they forced their way into the U.S. Capitol, using his phone's camera as a notebook. [The New Yorker](#)

Rioter accused of plotting to sell stolen Pelosi laptop to Russia turns herself in

Federal authorities arrested a woman whose former romantic partner says she took a laptop from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office during the riot at the U.S. Capitol earlier this month. Riley June Williams was arrested Monday, according to a Justice Department official. It's not yet known when her initial court appearance will be.

[AP/NBC](#)

Meet three D.C. police officers who fought for the U.S. Capitol

He had been pushed, shoved and even tased multiple times. He was alone and exhausted. Lying dazed on the marble steps leading out of the west side of the U.S. Capitol on the afternoon of Jan. 6, D.C. Police Officer Mike Fanone heard bone-chilling words coming from some of President Trump's supporters who were surrounding him.

[NPR](#)

US Capitol rioters ask for pardons after facing federal charges

Two supporters of President Donald Trump who rioted in the U.S. Capitol have publicly pleaded with the outgoing president for pardons as they face federal charges, arguing they were merely following his instructions. Realtor Jenna Ryan, 50, of Carrollton, Texas, turned herself in to the FBI in Dallas on Friday.

[Courthouse News Service](#)

Records show Trump allies behind rally that ignited Capitol riot

Members of President Donald Trump's failed presidential campaign played key roles in orchestrating the Washington rally that spawned a deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol, according to an Associated Press review of records, undercutting claims the event was the brainchild of the president's grassroots supporters.

[Courthouse News Service](#)

California / National

Trump signs executive order expanding prosecutors' access to concealed carry permits

President Trump signed an executive order on Monday expanding access to personal firearms for federal law enforcement officials. The order is one of the last of Trump's presidency, with Joe Biden set to be sworn into office on Wednesday. The purpose of the order is to remove "undue obstacles" for law enforcement officers and prosecutors to obtain concealed carry licenses, as well as to expand protections for prosecutors and judges.

[Yahoo News](#)

Questions raised over why suspect in Temple grad's killing was free on bail (Video)

The shooting and killing of recent Temple University graduate Milan Loncar while he was walking his dog just a block from his Brewerytown home has rocked Philadelphia. The decision to lower bail for Davis Josephus, the man accused of gunning down Loncar, in the weeks before the killing is being questioned. NBC10's Pamela Osborne reports.

[NBC10](#)

Cash bail reform: A lesson for Illinois? New York, California also got rid of it, but reforms didn't last

Legislators have taken a giant step toward reforming the criminal justice system in Illinois by approving a bill that would do away with cash bail, but the experiences of other states that tried similar reforms show it's not a sure thing. If Gov. J.B. Pritzker signs the measure into law, Illinois will become one of a handful of states that have enacted major changes regarding cash bail.

[Chicago Sun-Times](#)

New bill seeks to help defendants fight racial bias in convictions and sentences

On Sunday, four California lawmakers announced the introduction of the California Racial Justice Act for All, AB 256, a bill expanding efforts to reduce racial bias in the courtroom. Assemblymembers Ash Kalra (D-San Jose), Sydney Kamlager (D-Los Angeles), Robert Rivas (D-Hollister), and Miguel Santiago (D-Los Angeles) introduced AB 256 together.

[Witness LA](#)

Consumer

Amazon again on the US government's notorious markets blacklist

Amazon remains on the US "Notorious Market List" for a second year. The US Trade Representative's Notorious Markets List is reserved for the worst online markets and offenders that enable and facilitate the world's largest criminal enterprise; counterfeit product sales, copyright piracy, and trademark infringement. Amazon also has the distinction of being the first and only US company to be added to the list.

[The Counterfeit Report](#)

The public health crisis hidden in Amazon warehouses

We conducted a public health study in collaboration with Warehouse Worker Resource Center (WWRC) to examine how Amazon's pace of work policies and practices affect worker health, safety, and well-being. We interviewed and surveyed Amazon workers, including full-time and part-time workers at Amazon fulfillment and delivery centers, and Amazon subcontracted delivery drivers at facilities in Southern California.

[Human Impact Partners](#)

Home Chef to pay \$450,000 to settle lawsuit claiming it overcharged subscribers

Home Chef will pay \$450,000 to settle a civil lawsuit that accused the online home-cooked meal delivery company of charging customers for ongoing subscriptions without their express consent, the Los Angeles County District

Attorney's Office said Friday, Jan. 15. The company's West Coast production facility is in San Bernardino where it employs some 300 people.

[City News Service](#)

Convictions / Sentences / Pleas

Man pleads guilty after drone hits LAPD helicopter, conviction 1st of its kind

A Los Angeles man pleaded guilty Thursday to a misdemeanor count after his drone crashed into a police helicopter, prompting an emergency landing, federal prosecutors said. It's believed to be the first criminal conviction for unsafe operation of an unmanned aircraft in the nation, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California said in a statement.

[NBC News](#)

Orange County man who was chased by police while possessing 75 pounds of cocaine in his car pleads guilty to federal charge

An Orange County man who led police on a high-speed car chase after they attempted to pull him over with approximately 75 pounds of cocaine in his vehicle pleaded guilty today to a federal narcotics charge. Anthony Martinez, 40, of La Habra, pleaded guilty to one count of possession with intent to distribute cocaine.

[Department of Justice News Release](#)

Rancho San Pedro gang leader sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for role in heroin, oxycodone trafficking operation

A Rancho San Pedro street gang member who oversaw the group's daily operations, arranged sales of oxycodone and heroin, and reported to incarcerated Mexican Mafia members about the gang's activities, was sentenced today to 120 months in federal prison. Robert "Stretch" Messersmith, 34, of San Pedro, was sentenced by United States District Judge Stephen V. Wilson.

[Department of Justice News Release](#)

LASD Deputy Jason Ghassan Kailany pleads not guilty to rape charges

A Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy pleaded not guilty Friday to charges that he raped and sexually assaulted an acquaintance at his home while he was off duty in 2018. Jason Ghassan Kailany, 26, was charged last November with one count each of forcible rape and forcible oral copulation. He could face up to 16 years in state prison if convicted as charged, according to the District Attorney's Office.

[CBS LA](#)

A US Customs and Border Protection officer was sentenced to 30 months for taking a \$6,000 bribe at the US-Mexico border

A US Customs and Border Protection officer was sentenced to 30 months in prison for taking a bribe at the US-Mexico border, according to the Department of Justice. Jose Rosalio Fuentes, 58, plead guilty in February 2020 to accepting \$6,000 bribe from Juan Carlos Gonzalez-Villa, a convicted and deported felon. At the time of the incident, Fuentes was a canine officer operating in Nogales, Arizona.

[Insider](#)

Corrections & Parole

Convicted SLO County stalker eligible for release in April

An Atascadero man accused of stalking, harassing, and abusing roughly 30 men and women will likely be released from prison in April of this year, almost three years earlier than his victims expected. Josiah Johnstone was convicted of a felony count of stalking and felony criminal threats in San Luis Obispo County Superior Court on Jan. 28, 2020, in a case involving two of his ex-girlfriends who say their relationships with Johnstone ended in emotional and physical abuse.

[New Times](#)

Despite commutation, Rialto man denied parole for murdering wife in 1980

The state has denied parole for a Rialto man who 40 years ago shot his wife to death as she slept and then shot himself in a failed effort to fool investigators into believing that an intruder had fired the bullets. Deborah Bailey, 26, a graduate of Verdugo Hills High and UCLA, was killed on Dec. 24, 1980.

[Riverside Press-Enterprise](#)

CDCR announces new app for family, friends to schedule video visits with inmates

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has announced a new tool to help friends and family visit inmates. The Visitation Scheduling Application (VSA) app can be accessed on smartphones, tablets and computers and allows approved visitors to easily schedule their own video visits and receive instant confirmation.

[KGET](#)

O.C. man sentenced to over 24 years in prison for traveling to engage in sex with minors and production of child pornography

An Orange County man was sentenced today to 292 months in federal prison for travelling out of state to sexually abuse minors - including a 6-year-old girl - and for inducing minors to send him sexually explicit videos of themselves. Daniel Seibert, 29, of Lake Forest, was sentenced by United States District Judge James V. Selna.

[Department of Justice News Release](#)

Articles of Interest

NRA declares bankruptcy, plans to incorporate in Texas

The National Rifle Association announced Friday it has filed for bankruptcy protection and will seek to incorporate the nation's most politically influential gun-rights group in Texas instead of New York. The announcement came months after New York's attorney general sued the organization over claims that top executives illegally diverted tens of millions of dollars for lavish personal trips, no-show contracts for associates and other questionable expenditures.

[AP](#)

Legal action filed to obtain confidential Natalie Wood death records

An inquiry into the 1981 drowning death of Hollywood actress Natalie Wood has been opened with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for a new book that claims there was a cover-up of the circumstances around her death. A man writing a book about the incident has filed legal action to obtain sheriff records, which he says the department to date has refused to turn over. Samuel A. Perroni, a retired federal prosecutor and Arkansas trial lawyer, brought the petition Thursday in Los Angeles Superior Court against the L.A.S.D. and Sheriff Alex Villanueva, seeking a judge's order directing that the information be turned over.

[CBS LA](#)

Disgraced Attorney Michael Avenatti's quiet 2020 is about to give way to a wild 2021

After a spectacular 15-minutes-of-fame crash and burn that included serious talk of a U.S. presidential bid, Los Angeles lawyer and three-time convicted felon Michael Avenatti enjoyed a quiet 2020 confined to a friend's Venice home on a court-ordered COVID release from jail. But while he's secured about a dozen continuances in his three cross-county criminal cases, Avenatti couldn't avoid a sanction issued December 23 in an Orange County civil case: a judge fined him \$960 for failing to participate in an evidentiary proceeding in a longstanding lawsuit over \$5.4 million Avenatti's former co-counsel claims he stole.

[Los Angeles Magazine](#)

How the antifa conspiracy theory traveled from the fringe to the floor of Congress

While much of America watched a mob of Trump supporters overrun police and break into the halls of Congress Wednesday afternoon, members of the far right chatted up an imaginary narrative of what was really going on. After weeks of planting the idea, dozens of extremists used social media to promote an idea with no basis in reality - that the people besieging the Capitol were actually far-left agitators disguised as Trump supporters.

[USA Today](#)

DoorDash can't duck restaurant's false advertising suit

Already struggling to survive the crippling effects of a raging pandemic, a mom-and-pop restaurant was stunned to learn last summer the food delivery app DoorDash had falsely labeled it as "closed" or "unavailable" on its platform. On Monday, the restaurant received more welcome news when a federal judge advanced its false advertising class action against the San Francisco-based technology company.

[Courthouse News Service](#)

Biden campaigned on eliminating death penalty - we could soon see how that turns out

In 1994, Sen. Joe Biden sponsored a far-reaching crime bill that lengthened federal sentences and expanded the federal death penalty to cover about 60 crimes. In 2020, Biden ran for president on a platform that advocated eliminating the federal death penalty and giving states incentives, presumably federal funding, to abolish their capital punishment laws.

[San Francisco Chronicle](#)

Peter Nygard's own son working to help lock up his 'monster' father for life

The son of Canadian fashion mogul Peter Nygard is working behind the scenes to help the FBI investigate allegations that his father sexually assaulted dozens of girls and women in the US over decades. Kai Bickle, 38, one of three children born to Nygard and longtime ex-girlfriend Patricia Bickle, has spent the past 18 months not only offering support to authorities but also lending a hand to victims and their lawyers, the Daily Mail reported.

[New York Post](#)

Pension

CalPERS records 12.4% return in 2020

CalPERS earned a net return of 12.4% for the year, 8.4% for the three years, 9.7% for the five years and 8.4% for the 10 years years ended Dec. 31, CEO Marcie Frost said Tuesday at a board meeting. The \$444.5 billion California Public Employees' Retirement System, Sacramento, earned 6.3% for the 20-year period. Benchmark returns for the periods were not available.

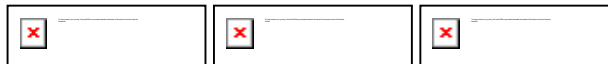
[Pensions & Investments](#)

San Diego's pension payment spiking \$50M, worsening budget crisis during pandemic

San Diego's annual pension payment will rise by nearly \$50 million this June, making it much harder for the tourism-reliant city to balance its budget while tax revenues continue their sharp slide due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The city's pension board is requiring a \$49.3 million spike in the annual pension payment - from \$365.6 million a year to \$414.9 million - because estimates of long-term pension debt rose this year from just over \$3 billion to \$3.34 billion.

[San Diego Union-Tribune](#)

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