

FRAMED



IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times
KENT EASTER in one of his many court appearances. He faced professional ruin after being charged with planting drugs in the car of an Irvine school volunteer.

He blames her — but will the jury buy it?

BY CHRISTOPHER GOFFARD
CHAPTER FIVE: TRIAL

It was my wife, Kent Easter told jurors. She had become obsessed with destroying the PTA mom, he said. She had planted the pot and painkillers in Kelli Peters’ car. She had lured him into her criminal scheme. She was the reason he sat here today, his life a shambles, on trial for a felony. Easter had taken the witness stand in his own defense, casting himself as a figure instantly familiar to aficionados of 1940s crime dramas: the hapless cuckold and sap, undone by a femme fatale and her noirish machinations. It was a pitiable tale, but he was a hard man to warm up to. He had an air of bloodless detachment that came across as arrogance. He had been a busy man, he explained, logging 200 billable hours a month for his big Newport Beach law firm, trying to appease a hectoring spouse who was never satisfied. He knew that his wife, Jill, had been unfaithful to him, off and on, for years. “I felt that my job was to be a husband, to stay married,” Easter testified. “Nobody in our family had ever gotten divorced.” As a glimpse into the toxic power dynamic of the marriage — as a window into his wife’s obsessiveness — Easter’s team presented Defense Exhibit L. It was an email she sent him in March 2010, he said, [See **Trial**, A10]

ELECTION 2016

A nation of immigrants no more?

Trump’s starkly nativist plan calls for a drastic, long-term drop in legal entries to ‘ensure assimilation.’
BY DAVID LAUTER AND BRIAN BENNETT

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump’s immigration speech generated intense speculation about whether he would soften his hard line on illegal immigration, but instead, the real change came with his unexpected, full-throated advocacy of a long-term cutback on legal immigrants. Trump had previously flirted with the idea of cutting legal immigration, but Wednesday’s speech in Phoenix marked his first public embrace of the full restrictionist position.

Trump broke sharply from the Republican Party’s long-standing positions and adopted the most openly nativist platform of any major-party presidential nominee in decades. If Trump is elected, the shift he advocates would greatly reduce immigration overall and move the U.S. from an immigration philosophy of allowing strivers from around the world to take advantage of American opportunities to one focused on bringing in people who already have money and job skills. That viewpoint is deeply divisive within the GOP — another example of the stress that Trump’s campaign has put on the party. “This kind of emphasis on dealing with legal immigration in this way is not something a major nominee has done in the last 60 years,” said Roy Beck, the [See **Trump**, A15]



MARCUS YAM Los Angeles Times
DONALD TRUMP deviated from the Republican Party’s stance again in calling for the most restrictive immigration policy of any major-party presidential nominee in decades. **BACK STORY**, A2

ANALYSIS

With his speech, Trump threatens Republican future

BY CATHLEEN DECKER

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump’s aggressively tough speech on immigration buried the notion that he planned to pivot away from the posture that got him the Republican nomination to a gentler position tailored for more moderate general election voters, Republicans included. It also may have buried his party’s strategy for long-term survival: the effort to appeal to the Latino and Asian voters who are replacing the waning numbers of white voters on whom the GOP has long depended. Trump’s Wednesday night remarks made clear that he intends to try to win the presidency with the group that won him the nomination — mostly male,

white voters who feel stressed by the economy, the rapid changes in American society or both — in defiance of fears even among other Republicans that such a base is not big enough to secure the White House. Nothing in his speech served to expand his reach among minority Americans. For some Republicans who have worked for decades to diversify their party, the result felt apocalyptic. Mike Madrid, a California GOP strategist who has sought to broaden the party’s reach among Latinos and other nonwhite voters, declared himself “stunned” at Trump’s approach. “We’re witnessing the end of the party,” he said. “I now know what my father meant in 1980 when he told me the party he grew up [See **Analysis**, A15]

Rocket loss is a blow to SpaceX, Facebook

BY SAMANTHA MASUNAGA AND JIM PUZZANGHERA

An unmanned SpaceX rocket, topped by an Israeli satellite, was being prepped for a test firing Thursday morning at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida when something went wrong. The 604-ton Falcon 9 rocket was being fueled with a potent mix of liquid oxygen and rocket-grade kerosene propellant when an explosion quickly enveloped the launch pad in flames. The ensuing fireball delivered a blow to the efforts of two high-profile billionaires: SpaceX Chief Executive Elon Musk and Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg. The rocket, scheduled to launch Saturday, was carrying a satellite designed to bring the Internet to remote villages in Africa and help the social media giant expand its global footprint. Instead, the satellite and rocket were destroyed in several fiery explosions — loud enough to be heard 40 miles away — as wind spread a plume of black smoke so large and thick it showed up on weather radar. [See **Rocket**, A12]



JUAN BARRETO AFP/Getty Images
POLICE IN Caracas block marchers who are demanding a vote to recall Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. The country is in economic crisis.

Another left-wing leader under siege in Latin America

BY MERY MOGOLLON AND CHRIS KRAUL

CARACAS, Venezuela — Nothing was going to stop Nelson Rivas from joining the Taking Caracas demonstration Thursday — not his wheelchair, not the six-mile distance over uneven pavement, not the whiffs of tear gas, not the ominous threats of arrests from President Nicolas Maduro. “I came to demand that the recall election take place according to the constitution,” said Rivas, 35. “Whatever your point of view, the condition of the country is

the worst.” Rivas took his place in the ranks that filled Francisco de Miranda Avenue, one of three main streets in the capital brimming with thousands and thousands of protesters, mostly dressed in white. Surrounding him were people carrying posters reading “No more socialism,” “Maduro Out,” and “Venezuela wants a recall.” Marchers such as Rivas said life in Venezuela has become a daily ordeal of standing in endless lines for food, for government services, for medical care. [See **Venezuela**, A4]

Bankruptcy hits local seaports

South Korean shipper Hanjin’s vessels stay anchored offshore just as retailers are bringing in goods for the holidays. **BUSINESS**, C1

Freedom to sit?

NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick’s refusal to stand for the national anthem has ignited a debate over freedom and protest. **NATION**, A6

Weather
Mostly sunny.
L. A. Basin: 80/61. **B6**



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