



CAN THIS RETIRED MARINE WHIP FRESNO UNIFIED INTO SHAPE?

January 8, 2019 | Bill McEwen

The biggest culture collision in the history of Fresno Unified School District is underway. On one side is retired Marine Maj. Terry Slatic, who was elected to succeed trustee Brooke Ashjian in November. I've spent a good part of the past 45 years interviewing serious men and women —college and NFL coaches; local, state and federal politicians; sheriffs and police chiefs.

Slatic is the most serious person I've met. The subject the veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars is most serious about right now is making Fresno Unified a top-ti-

"I'm not here to make friends. I'm here to help fix a broken district. I'm here to fix a culture of complete unaccount**ability.**" — Trustee Terry Slatic

er school district. ASAP. On the other side is a district with huge challenges and a long history of not overcoming them. Mistakes often are covered up or go unnoticed by today's fractured media.

High-ranking administrators think in terms of generational advancement — not immediate improvement.

Demanding Accountability

As Slatic sees it, his first board mission is to bring accountability to Fresno Unified's upper ranks. Slatic told me he's fully prepared to work 55 to 60 hours a week to ensure that laws are being followed, administrators are fully invested in their assignments, and students are receiving the quality of instruction they deserve.

"Accountability begins now," said Slatic, who is also a retired business executive. "And some people don't appear to understand that. They're asking, 'Why is he getting into our business?' The answer is, I'm not here to make friends. I'm here to help fix a broken district. I'm here to fix a culture of complete unaccountability."

Interestingly, Slatic assigns responsibility for Fresno Unified's struggles in college readiness, special education, closing the African American achievement gap, and quickly getting English Language Learners up to speed on the top ranks — not teachers. "It surprises me that after getting rid of Michael Hanson as superintendent, no one in the community is taking a look at the rest of the team," Slatic said. "It makes no sense to me. If you don't make other changes, the success rate is going to be zero."

Nelson Now Answering to a Stronger Board

At the Dec. 12 meeting of a board that included two other newly elected trustees, Veva Islas and Keshia Thomas, there was an obvious power shift and change in attitude. This new board made it clear that it will set the vision for the district, and it will be the job of Superintendent Bob Nelson and his team to carry it out. Equally clear: Effort, while appreciated, isn't the benchmark. Success is what counts.

Slatic provided a preview of what's to come with his questioning of Deputy Superintendent/CFO Ruth F. Quinto about her budget projections. Those projections have understated revenue by tens of millions of dollars

annually in recent years. "It surprises me that afspending reserves are at 8.49% — well above the state-required 3%.

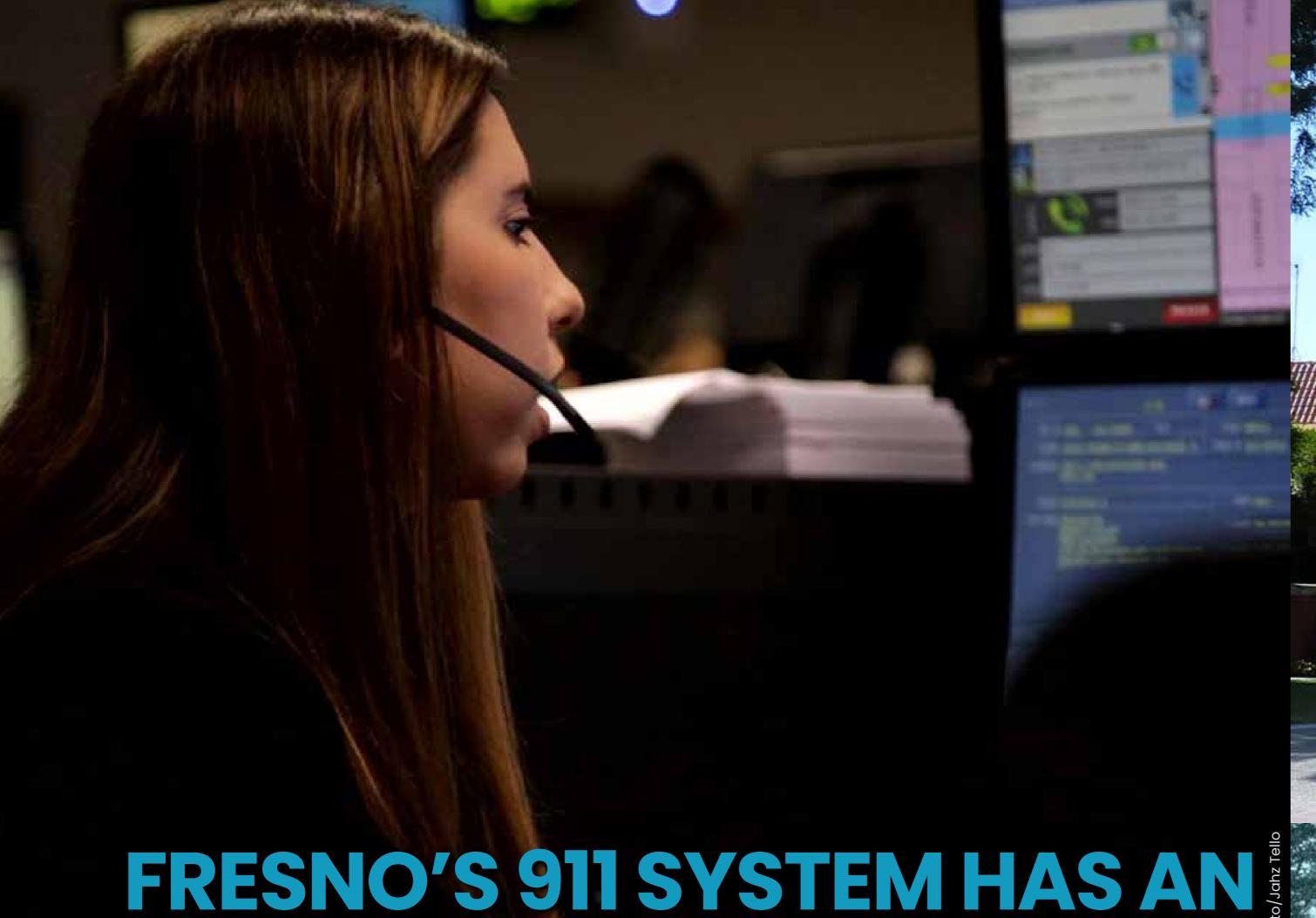
Quinto said that early on it was difficult to forecast Fresno Unified's revenue under

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the state's new Local Control Funding Formula, but the district had gotten better at it every year. She also explained that funding for uncompleted construction projects was carried forward.

Those answers didn't satisfy Slatic. "Perhaps we should be using a different model so that we can be using those funds in a different fashion at an earlier time," he said. After the meeting, he said it was a "tragedy" that carried-over reserve funds hadn't been directed to the classroom to help struggling students. At the Dec. 12 meeting of a board that included two other newly elected trustees, Veva Islas and Keshia Thomas, there was...

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FRESNO'S 911 SYSTEM HAS AN EMERGENCY SITUATION

January 4, 2019 | David Taub

Fresno has an emergency. Calling 911 isn't the solution, but rather the problem itself. Nearly 1,000 calls a day come into Fresno's 911 system. There are not enough dispatchers to handle them, leading to potentially life-threatening delays in getting through. Police Chief Jerry Dyer sounded the alarm during the city's annual budget hearing. "The number one pressing need in our department right now is in our communications center. I say that because of our inability to handle the incoming calls," Dyer told the city council.

Missing the Mark on Call Answer Times

That inability has resulted in Fresno failing to meet a state mandate requiring 95% of 911 calls to be answered within 15 seconds. In 2017, only 72% of Fresno's calls were answered in 15 seconds or less — a five-year low. While in 2018, through November, the percentage improved slightly to 79%, Fresno is still missing the mark. The city's 911 center staffing has fluctuated considerably in recent years. In 2007, the police department employed 95 dispatchers. But the economic recession that began in 2008 resulted in the loss of 18 positions. The

staffing has since rebounded somewhat, though its current roster of 87 dispatchers is still below 2007 levels. "We need to build upon that," Dyer says now.

Help is On the Way But More is Needed

Last year, the city of Fresno agreed to sell a parking a lot across from Chukchansi Park to the Fresno Grizzlies. City council members immediately began debating where to spend the proceeds. They ultimately voted to hire eight additional dispatchers for the city's 911 center. It isn't enough, dispatch supervisor Kathy DeBorde says. "Adding eight people into our budget is really only a small Band-Aid. We need, really, about 40 people (more)," DeBorde said. Dyer concurs with the need to increase total staffing to approximately 130 positions. Fresno PD has been hiring an average of four new dispatchers in each of the last few years. Dyer wants that hiring rate to double. The city's 911 communications center has the capacity for more personnel and recently underwent a \$2 million upgrade. The center needs to be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week with dispatchers answering both emergency 911...

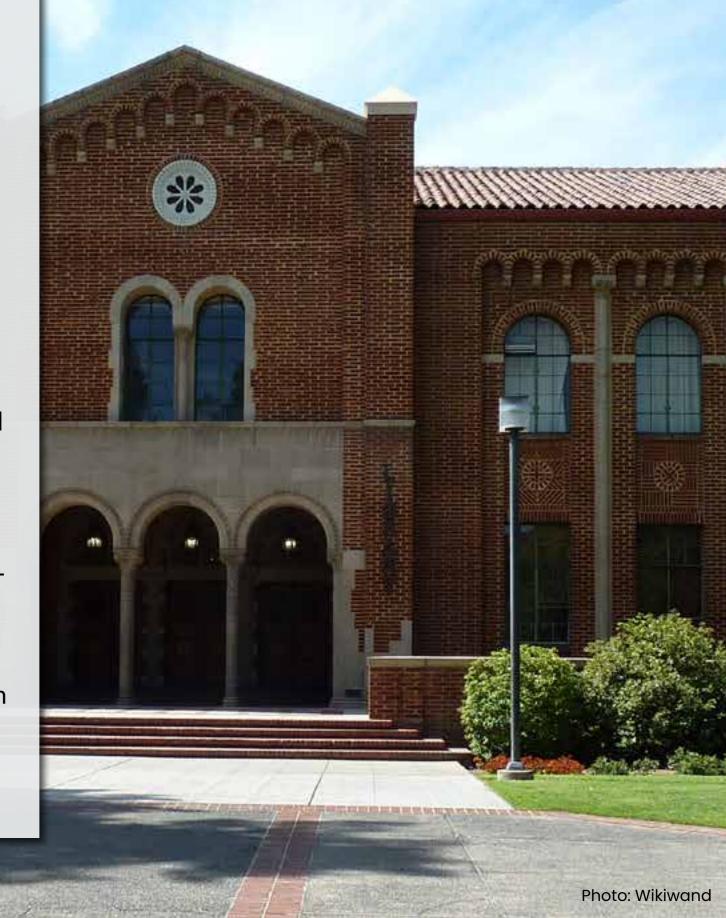
STATE CENTER TRUSTEES
DECLINE TO INVESTIGATE
PAYNE, KAHN

January 9, 2019 | David Taub

Tensions simmered at the State Center trustee meeting Tuesday (Jan. 8), but did not boil over like the last time the group met. The board voted 4-3 against forming a special committee to look into ethical misconduct allegations levied mainly at trustee Eric Payne, and to a lesser extent Bobby Kahn. The members tore into each other at a Dec. 11 meeting prompting board president Deborah Ikeda and district chancellor Paul Parnell to ask the board to dive further into the issue.

During Tuesday's debate, Payne opposed forming a committee. He acknowledged that boards disagree, and said that he was just responding to attacks against him. "This is really a distraction from the work that needs to be taking place to better serve our students, to address the issues within our system as it relates to equity, inclusion and diversity," Payne said from the dais. He said any disagreement between him and Kahn can be discussed personally, or debated on the floor. "This ... is a waste of taxpayer time and dollars," Payne said. Kahn...

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SNOWSTORM BURIES NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. MORE SNOW AHEAD.

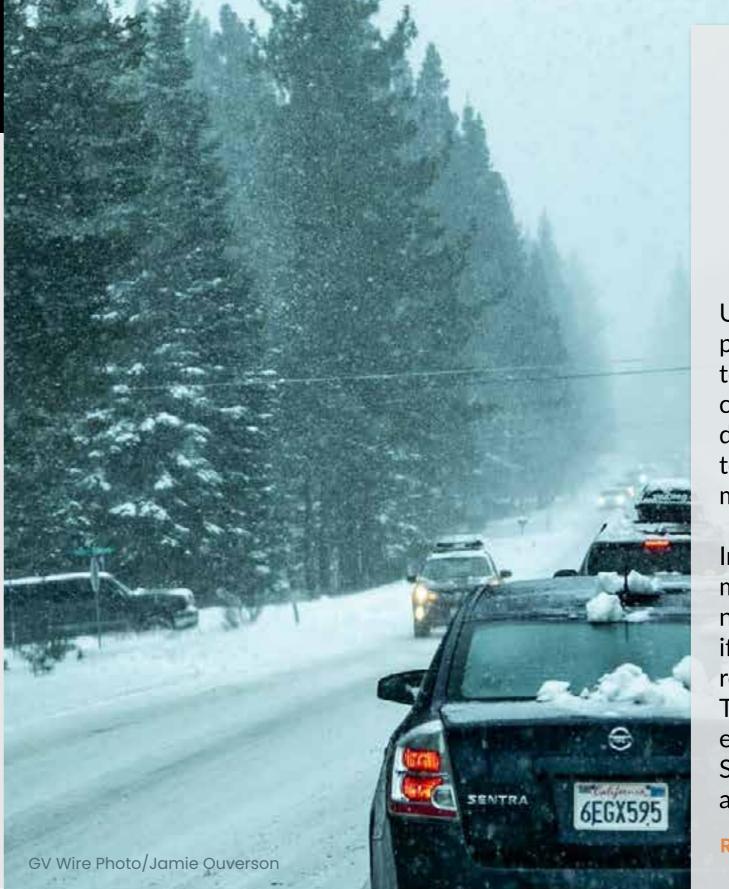
January 7, 2019 | AP News

Utility crews worked Monday to restore power to thousands of people after a winter storm swept through Northern California, toppling utility poles and trees and prompting the temporary closure of a major highway, Interstate 80. Strong winds and downed trees knocked out electricity for nearly 90,000 customers across the Sacramento region Sunday night. By Monday morning, 13,000 customers still had no power.

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In Oregon and Washington, tens of thousands of people remained without power after windstorms struck parts the northwest over the weekend. I-80 from Placer County in California to the state line with Nevada reopened Monday but it remained closed in Nevada's Washoe County, the California Transportation Department said. The Highway Patrol reported helping out dozens of motorists stuck in the snow near the Shaver Lake area Saturday night. Motorist planning to travel anywhere in the Sierra this week should check with Caltrans...

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NEWSOM HITS TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE HARD IN INAUGURAL SPEECH

January 7, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California Gov. Gavin Newsom was sworn in Monday and immediately drew sharp battle lines with President Donald Trump, pledging to enact "progressive, principled" policies as the antidote to the White House's "corruption and incompetence." "People's lives, freedom, security, the water we drink, the air

"People's lives, freedom, security, the water we drink, the air we breathe—they all hang in the balance."—Governor Gavin Newsom

we breathe — they all hang in the balance," Newsom, 51, declared to a crowd of hundreds packed into a tent outside the Capitol. Newsom took the helm as California's 40th governor

with a speech laced with bold pronouncements about California's values and the direction he envisions for the nation's most populous state.

New Governor Short on Specifics

But there were few specifics on how he'll get there. He never mentioned Trump by name, but said the president's administration is "hostile to California's values and interests" and blasted plans to build a wall along the nation's border with Mexico. "The country is watching us, the world is watching us. The future depends on us, and we will seize this moment," he said.

Standing Ovation for Pelosi

Newly installed U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a San Francisco Democrat, was among those in attendance for the inaugural address. She got a standing ovation when she entered, an affirmation of the strong backing her opposition to Trump has in California's Democrat-controlled capital.

A church choir from Compton got the crowd on its feet with upbeat renditions of popular songs to kick off the event, reflecting the younger, flashier style Newsom will bring compared to his 80-year-old predecessor, Jerry Brown.

Newsom's Son Wanders on Stage

In another sign of the generational shift, Newsom's 2-year-old son Dutch wandered on stage during the speech. Newsom, who has four children, picked him up and continued delivering his speech. The boy then walked around stage dragging a blanket, drawing laughs from the crowd until Newsom's wife took him off stage. Even as he needled Trump, Newsom offered an overture to voters in rural California, millions of whom voted for Trump and John Cox, Newsom's Republican rival in November.

"I recognize that many in our rural communities believe that Sacramento doesn't care about them — doesn't even really see them," he said. "I see you. I care about you. And I will represent you with pride.

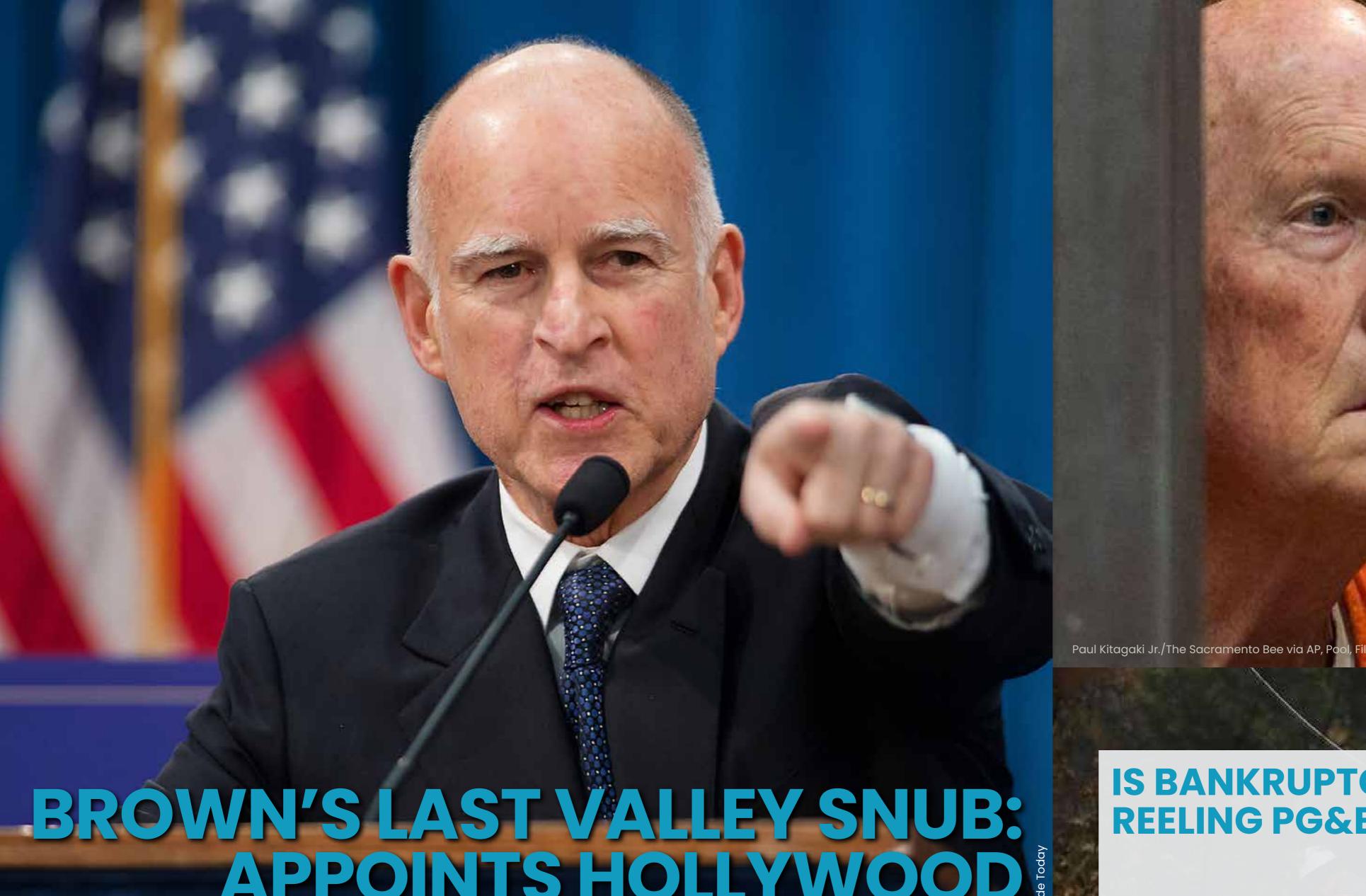
Will Take Aim at Gun Lobby, Payday Lenders

While touting the California Dream and strong economy, Newsom also acknowledged the state has problems, from a homelessness crisis to a gulf between the state's wealthiest and poorest residents to failing schools, all of which he called "moral imperatives." Beyond Trump, he pledged to take on drug companies, the gun lobby, polluters and payday lenders.

Newsom praised Brown, a longtime family friend, but indicated he would strike out a separate path from the fiscal restraint Brown made a hallmark of his last eight years in office. Brown sometimes angered legislative Democrats by rejecting big-ticket social spending items.

Newsom, meanwhile, already has pledged to expand access to early childhood education, reduce the cost of community college and extend family leave. He suggested Brown's method of resisting more spending in favor of saving needed rethinking. "For eight years, California has built a foundation of rock," he said...

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DNA CLEARS ACCUSED GOLDEN STATE KILLER OF TULARE COUNTY MURDER

January 9, 2019 | AP News

TULARE — The man accused of being California's Golden State Killer has been cleared of involvement in the 1975 murder of a 14-year-old girl, prosecutors said Tuesday. DNA testing excluded Joseph DeAngelo as a suspect in the murder of Donna Jo Richmond and — along with other evidence indicates that another man was rightfully convicted of the slaying, according to a conviction review.

The girl vanished on Dec. 26, 1975 while bicycling from a friend's house to her home near Exeter. Her body was later found in an orange grove. She had been strangled, beaten and stabbed 17 times. A convicted sex offender, Oscar Clifton, was convicted of kidnapping, attempted rape and murder. He was sentenced to life in prison and died there in 2013. DeAngelo has been charged with 26 counts of murder and kidnapping. Prosecutors believe that he killed 13 people and raped dozens of others in six California counties in the...

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APPOINTS HOLLYWOOD BY AGENT TO UC BOARD

January 8, 2019 | David Taub

Ever since Fred Ruiz left the UC Board of Regents, many in the San Joaquin Valley have hoped someone from the area would succeed him.

The wait will continue, at least another year for the region that is home to UC Merced. In a final snub to the Valley, Gov. Jerry Brown added Jay Sures, a Hollywood talent agent, to the board. Brown announced the selection Jan. 4, three days before he left office. There has been no Valley representation since Ruiz's term elapsed in 2016. He is best known as the founder of Dinuba-based Ruiz Foods. Sures will fulfill the remaining year of Bonnie Reiss's term through March 1, 2020.

Reiss died of cancer on April 2, 2018. "The San Joaquin Valley has not had a Regent since 2016," said Democratic Assemblyman Adam Gray of Merced. "The 26-member Board is already brimming with representatives from Los Angeles and the Bay Area, but despite nine different opportunities to correct this lapse, Governor Brown has failed to act.

"I have personally spoken to Governor Brown about what I hoped was his unintentional prejudice, but last week's appointment of yet another Los Angeles regent tells me he was not listening. It's downright offensive that despite hosting a UC campus in Merced, the governor refuses to allow a San...

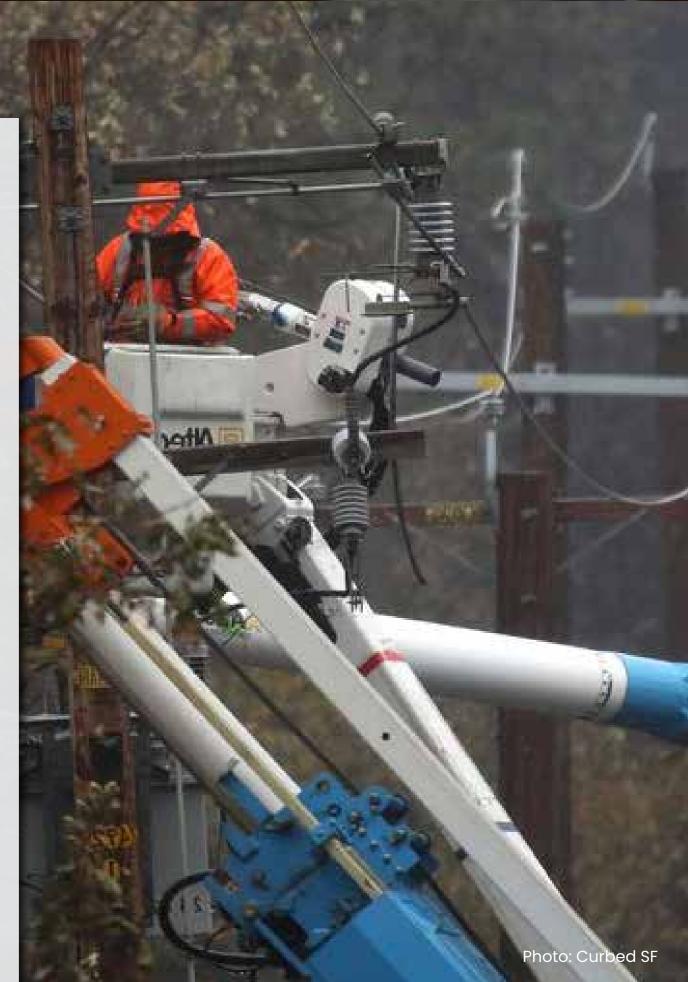
IS BANKRUPTCY NEAR FOR **REELING PG&E?**

January 7, 2019 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — California's largest power company is getting battered in midday trading Monday on reports that it's considering bankruptcy protection in the face of potentially crippling liability damages from a spate of wildfires. No cause has been determined for the source of California's Camp Fire, but PG&E reported an outage around the time and place the fire was ignited. Another transmission line malfunctioned a short time later, possibly sparking a second fire.

Reuters, citing anonymous sources, reports that the company has considered seeking financial shelter in bankruptcy court with potential liabilities reaching into the tens of billions. Shares tumbled 22 percent Monday, the latest severe selloff for the company since November and the outbreak of the state's deadliest recorded wildfires. PG&E Corp. did not immediately respond to a request for comment. On Friday, PG&E said its board of directors is engaging outside experts for...

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TRUMP TWEET: NO EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR CALIFORNIA

January 9, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is threatening to withhold Federal Emergency Management Agency money to help California cope with wildfires if the state doesn't improve its forest management practices.

However, local and state Republicans in California pushed back hard against the president's threat.

Assemblyman James Gallagher and state Sen. Jim Nielsen issued a joint statement saying that "a Twitter war ... will not solve the problem."

North State Lawmakers Ask President to Send FEMA @ Money for Camp Fire Survivors President Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he "ordered FEMA to send no more money" to the State of California. Senator Jim Nielsen (R-Tehama) and Assemblyman James Gallagher (R-Yuba City), who represent the Town of Paradise, issued the following statement: "The Camp Fire devastated the Town of Paradise and surrounding communities. Eighty-six people have died, and tens of thousands of lives have been shattered. This is one of the worst disasters in our nation's history. "We thank the President for being attentive and personally visiting the community to tour the devastation. "This Twitter war, however, is not helpful. It will not solve the problem. "We can all agree that people's lives and livelihoods are at stake. There is no "That is why the President's threat to withhold FEMA funds from California is wholly unacceptable. He made a commitment to the people who have lost everything in these fires, and we expect the federal government to follow through with this promise. "So let us work together. California is now investing \$1 billion in forestry management and we need cooperation and funding from the federal government to address the huge buildup of fuels on federal land." James Gallagher 🤣 @J_GallagherAD3 A statement from @CASenatorJim and I regarding @realDonaldTrump's tweet regarding FEMA funding for CA fire victims. ♥ 153 11:11 AM - Jan 9, 2019

88 people are talking about this

Trump tweeted Wednesday that California gets billions of dollars for fires that could have been prevented with better management. The state's former top firefighter Ken Pimlott disagrees, saying last month that California leads the nation in clearing away dead trees and thinning areas to remove fuel for fires.

Trump tweeted that "unless they get their act together ... I have ordered FEMA to send no more money. It is a disgraceful situation in lives & money!"

November's fire in the northern California town of Paradise was the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century, killing at least 85 people and destroying nearly 14,000 homes. Steve Crowder, a town councilman and a Republican from Paradise, which was leveled by the Camp Fire, said that Trump was trying to use California's devastating wildfires as a "political pawn."



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January 9, 2019 | AP News

12 GV Wire Weekly Digest

DES MOINES, Iowa — Billionaire investor and Democratic activist Tom Steyer said Wednesday that he will not run for the White House in 2020 and will instead focus on calling for President Donald Trump's impeachment.

Steyer, who has spent \$50 million on his Need to Impeach campaign and announced plans to spend \$40 million more this year, said at an event in Des Moines that "the impeachment question has reached an inflection point," given that Democrats have taken majority control of the House. "I said last year that I'm willing to do whatever I can to protect our

country from this reckless, lawless and dangerous president," Steyer said. "Therefore, I will be dedicating 100 percent of my time, effort and resources working for Mr. Trump's impeachment and removal from office. I am not running for president at this time."

Steyer Wants to Pressure Dems on Impeachment
Steyer said his \$40 million commitment for 2019 was designed to pressure the Democratic-controlled House to begin impeachment hearings and to persuade the party's presidential contenders to support impeachment on their...

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POMPEO STARTS MIDDLE EAST VISIT TO RAMP UP PRESSURE ON IRAN

January 8, 2019 | AP News

AMMAN, Jordan — The Trump administration is doubling down on commercial and diplomatic efforts in the coming weeks to "put real pressure on Iran," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said at the start of a Mideast tour Tuesday. Pompeo is meeting with U.S. allies in the region, including stops in Jordan, Egypt and several Gulf nations, to coordinate an anti-Iran campaign.

The trip comes amid confusion over conflicting statements by President Donald Trump and senior U.S. officials about a planned U.S. troop withdrawal from Syria. Trump made the surprise announcement about a withdrawal last month, saying some 2,000 troops fighting alongside Syrian Kurdish allies in northeastern Syria against Islamic State extremists would be pulled out soon. He did not give details, such as a timetable, leaving bewildered U.S. partners in the region...

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WHAT AIR TRAVELERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/Pool v

January 8, 2019 | AP News

DALLAS — The partial government shutdown is starting to affect air travel. Over the weekend, some airports had long lines at checkpoints, apparently caused by a rising number of security officers calling in sick while they are not getting paid. Safety inspectors aren't even on the job. A Federal Aviation Administration spokesman said Monday that inspectors are being called back to work on a case-by-case basis, with a priority put on inspecting airline fleets.

So far, the impact of the shutdown — entering its 18th day on Tuesday — has been most visible for some government buildings and national parks being closed, and trash piling up on the National Mall in front of the Capitol. If the shutdown continues, food stamp recipients will go without aid. By increasingly affecting air travel, however, the pain is being felt more widely. Here are some common questions about the shutdown's impact on airports and travel, along with the...



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FRESNO GROUPS CANCEL MEETING WITH TURKISH AG DELEGATION

January 10, 2019 | David Taub

After complaints from Fresno's Armenian community, a scheduled meeting between a Turkish agricultural delegation and local business leaders is off the calendar. "Out of respect to our community, the upcoming event scheduled for January 15 with an agriculturally-based Turkish delegation to Fresno has been canceled," the

"Out of respect to our community, the upcoming event scheduled for January 15 with an agriculturally-based Turkish delegation to Fresno has been canceled."

Fresno EDC, Fresno Chamber of Commerce, Fresno County Farm Bureau, and the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia in Fresno said in a joint statement. Sen. Andreas Bor-

geas (R-Fresno) also signed the statement. The Fresno Business Journal first reported about the meeting between the Fresno groups and the West Mediterranean Exporters Association, known by the acronym BAIB.

BAIB Visit

According to its website, BAIB is a union of ag product exporters representing Turkey. They often send delegations to America to various trade shows. The Business Journal reported that the group's mission was to help create trade opportunities. The trade mission is being organized by Trelodex, a Los Angeles-based consultant. The itinerary includes stops at the San Francisco Fancy Food Show this weekend, visits to production and packing facilities in Fresno, along with the now-canceled meeting with the Fresno groups.

A visit to Los Angeles is also part of the trip. "California is the most important agriculture exporter in the USA and Antalya region in Turkey is likewise for Turkey. Many business opportunities may be created if the relations develop," Trelodex said on its website.

Meetings Offended Armenian Community

The Armenian community, with a strong presence in Fresno, has a contentious relationship with Turkey. One

of the top sources of strife is the 1915-1917 Armenian Genocide, the massacre in which 1.5 Armenians were killed at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. After the Business Journal first reported the story on Wednesday (Jan. 9), honorary consul Berj Apkarian said his phone was besieged by upset members of the community. Comments on the Facebook page of Sevag Tateosian, a former aide to Supervisor Debbie Poochigian and current talk show host on CMAC, expressed dismay that the delegation was coming to down.

Tateosian also serves as chair of the Armenian National Committee of America Central California. "Block it," wrote one social media user. Lee Ann Eager, president/ CEO of Fresno EDC, along with Nathan Ahle, president/ CEO of the chamber, attended swearing-in ceremonies at Fresno City Hall for the new council Thursday. Eager and Ahle told GV Wire that they experienced many calls about the trade group's visit. Both left City Hall early to confer with Apkarian and Ryan Jacobsen of the farm bureau.



January 7, 2019 | GV Wire

Chuck Freilich knows Israel's military capabilities and politics inside out. After all, he is a former deputy Israeli national security adviser. Now he's a senior fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center and an op-ed he penned for the left-leaning Israeli news organization Haaretz is gaining widespread attention. Not just because of the implications for Israel, but for the United States as well.

In "For the First Time, Israel Faces an Adversary Too Powerful to Be Defeated," Freilich makes the case that Israel lacks a systematic plan to confront Iran — and other crucial long-term national objectives.

Supreme Leader Unveils 50-Year Plan for Iranian Supremacy Freilich notes that Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei recently outlined a draft version of a vision for Iran for the next 50 years.

Writes Freilich: "Khamenei's overall objective is for Iran to gain regional, and even global, supremacy, through technological self-sufficiency, and by resisting Western concepts of the international order, politics and culture. "Khamenei's attempt to craft such an actionable vision is bold and impressive. Under his leadership, Iran is at least trying to think systematically about its national objectives. He has set out...

16 GV Wire Weekly Digest



SENATE REPUBLICANS TARGET BOYCOTT MOVEMENT IN \$38B ISRAEL DEFENSE FUNDING BILL

January 8, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans' first bill of the new Congress aims to insert the legislative branch into President Donald Trump's Middle East policy — but also tries to drive a wedge between centrist and liberal Democrats over attitudes toward Israel. Among other provisions, the bipartisan package, backed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., would provide \$38 billion in security assistance to Israel over 10 years.

It had initially drawn widespread support ahead of Tuesday's planned vote. In addition to supporting Israel, the bill provides aid to Jordan and would slap sanctions on Syrians involved in war crimes. But Democrats are split over the addition of Republican Sen. Marco Rubio's "Combatting BDS Act," which seeks to counter the global Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement against Israel over its treatment of Palestinians and the settlements. For now, the package will almost certainly stall. The bill comes amid the partial government...

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NAVY SEAL TO PLEAD NOT GUILTY TO MURDER CHARGE OF ISIS TEEN

January 4, 2019 | AP News

SAN DIEGO — A decorated Navy SEAL is facing charges of premeditated murder and numerous other offenses in connection with the fatal stabbing of a teenage Islamic State prisoner under his care in Iraq in 2017, along with the shooting of unarmed Iraqi civilians.

Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher plans to plead not guilty to all the charges Friday during an arraignment hearing at Naval Base San Diego, his attorney Phil Stackhouse said. The case stands out because of the seriousness of the allegations against an elite special warfare operator and the fact that the prosecution's case includes the accounts of fellow Navy SEALs, an extremely tight-knit group even by military standards. Stackhouse said his client is being falsely accused by disgruntled SEALs who wanted to get rid of a demanding platoon leader. Gallagher was awarded the Bronze Star twice. Navy prosecutors have painted a picture...

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