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INSIDE THE CARTEL



DON BARTLETT/ Los Angeles Times

BEACON: A shrine glows outside the Compton home where drug trafficker Gabriel Dieblas Roman sought the help of a fortuneteller named Lupita — unaware that the DEA was listening in.

BIG RIGS AND BLACK MAGIC

Moving a river of cocaine from L.A. to the East took a web of workers — and maybe a psychic's OK

Richard Marosi
SECOND OF FOUR PARTS

Gabriel Dieblas Roman took orders from cartel bosses in Mexico, hard men who ruled by fear, but he wouldn't approve a shipment without talking to a plucky, middle-aged woman from Compton. Guadalupe "Lupita" Villalobos ran a storefront botanica where Virgin of Guadalupe statuettes sat beside grinning Saint Death skeletons. She would threaten to turn neighbors into toads, and her clients believed she could divine the future by studying snail shells scattered on a tabletop. Roman, a client, called her one day for advice on an important matter.

Sounding anxious about a pending cocaine shipment to the East Coast, he asked Villalobos to "give it a little look." "When is it leaving?" Villalobos asked. "Tomorrow," Roman said. A rattling sound came over the phone, then the jangle of objects spilling on a hard surface. "Well, everything is normal," Villalobos told Roman. But she wasn't finished. "Be careful, there is surveillance," she said. Be wary of a young *gordito*, a chubby guy. "It seems that he has trouble with the police." Roman knew who she meant. [See **Cartel**, A6]

Dueling debt plans, neither a silver bullet

Leaders of both parties face hurdles on votes. Obama urges the public to demand compromise.

LISA MASCARO AND CHRISTI PARSONS
REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON

The Republican leader of the House and the Democratic leader of the Senate issued dueling proposals to allow the federal debt ceiling to be raised — both with steep spending cuts, but neither with a clear route to ending the standoff over the government's ability to pay its bills.

Both plans will face key tests in the next few days, when House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) each plan to bring their proposals to the floors of their respective chambers.

In the House, the issue will be whether conservative Republicans remain united behind Boehner even though his plan received mixed reviews from conservatives, with some influential "tea party"-affiliated lawmakers and groups denouncing it as too weak.

In the Senate, the question will be whether Reid can attract the seven Republicans he needs to cut off a threatened filibuster and claim bipartisan backing.

In advance of the votes, President Obama made a nationally televised speech Monday night, asking the public to contact members of Congress and demand compromise.

Shortly after his speech, the websites of several mem-

bers of Congress crashed, officials said, in a shutdown that they could not immediately explain. The problems affected dozens of well-known lawmakers from both parties, including Boehner and fellow Republicans Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) and Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) as well as top Democrats, including Sens. Richard J. Durbin of Illinois and Charles E. Schumer of New York.

Despite the increasingly heated rhetoric in Washington, the Boehner and Reid plans have similarities. Both embrace the Republican goal of deep cuts in federal budgets. Neither includes any of the new tax revenue that Obama called for.

But the two also have some key differences. Boehner's would cut more [See **Debt ceiling**, A10]

BEATING SUSPECTS ALLEGEDLY BRAGGED OF FIGHT

The men accused of attacking Giants fan Bryan Stow have been implicated by a relative, sources say.

RICHARD WINTON, JACK LEONARD AND ANDREW BLANKSTEIN

The trouble began sometime after the first pitch at the Dodgers' opening day game against the San Francisco Giants.

Dodgers fans Louie Sanchez, 29, and Marvin Norwood, 30 — friends and neighbors from Rialto — yelled taunts at Giants fans and threw soda at them, according to several law enforcement sources. They were so unruly that people sitting nearby in the stands behind third base later reported the pair to police. As the game wound down, the men allegedly grew more hostile. Sanchez reportedly threw soda at a female Giants fan inside Dodger Stadium and pushed another fan as they walked out to the parking lot.

Then, authorities said, the men ran into Bryan Stow. The 42-year-old Santa Clara County paramedic was wearing Giants apparel and searching for a taxi with friends when Sanchez and Norwood allegedly beat him in the parking lot in an attack that left him with brain damage.

In the aftermath of the beating, the two alleged assailants bragged to co-workers that they had been fighting at the game but did not mention Stow by name, according to a law enforcement source who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is continuing.

But as police stepped up their efforts to identify the attackers amid a public outcry, Sanchez told witnesses to keep quiet about what had happened, prosecutors said in a court document filed Monday. Although the [See **Beating**, A11]

Another jolt to electric bills

Here is how the Southern California Edison request to raise power rates would affect residential customers:

	Current monthly bill	Proposed jump	Bill increase
Low usage (300 kilowatt-hours)	\$37.93	5.9%	\$2.26
Moderate usage (600 kWh)	\$92.96	9.1%	\$8.48
High usage (900 kWh)	\$170.70	11.1%	\$18.06

Source: Southern California Edison
Los Angeles Times

Consumer groups hope to pull plug on Edison rate hike

MARC LIFSHER
REPORTING FROM SACRAMENTO

To Southern California Edison, the \$3.2 billion in rate hikes it wants on homes and businesses are vital to ensuring much-needed improvements to an aging electrical grid serving 14 million people and 285,000 companies.

But consumer advocates say Edison is being greedy. While conceding the utility has legitimate infrastructure costs, they say the rate hike proposal has been swollen with questionable allocations for pay raises and pensions.

An administrative law judge opened a two-day public hearing on the rate request in Los Angeles on Monday. The judge will

make a recommendation this fall to the state Public Utilities Commission, which is expected to rule on the Edison request by early next year.

If approved, monthly electricity bills would jump about 9.1% for the average residential customer, who uses 600 kilowatt-hours of power a month.

Low-usage customers — below 300 kilowatt hours — would see rates climb about 5.9%, while customers who use 900 kilowatt-hours or more would see their bills increase 11.1%.

Businesses would also feel the sting, although not as much as residents. The average small to mid-size business would see a 6.9% increase in monthly electric bills under the Edison plan. The average large industrial [See **Edison**, A10]

Perils of taking the pledge

Today's candidates are pressed to sign more promises than ever. Critics say that can gum up governance.

MARK Z. BARABAK

It used to be much simpler being a presidential candidate, back when the only pledge that mattered was the one taken with hand over heart, pledging allegiance to the United States

of America.

Now contestants are asked to swear any number of oaths. Among them: promises to oppose tax hikes and legalized abortion, fight pornography, outlaw same-sex marriage, denounce Islamic law, cap federal spending, overhaul the U.S. tax code, run Washington like a business and support a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget.

And that's just on the Republican side.

With faith in government at bottom-scraping lows,

each week seems to bring a new request from some interest group demanding that the White House hopefuls affix their signatures to a specific policy manifesto.

To those pushing such pledges, they represent a way to force politicians out of their customary gray zone into a firm, inalterable commitment, inked in black and white.

"When someone takes the pledge, you know exactly what they mean," said Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform, whose [See **Pledges**, A8]

Labor deal ends lockout at NFL

Players unanimously accept the league's proposal for a 10-year collective-bargaining agreement. **SPORTS, C1**

Watershed film

Twenty years ago this month, "Boyz n the Hood" was causing extreme reactions from two very different audiences. **CALENDAR, D1**

World **A3**
Nation **A5**
Weather **AA6**

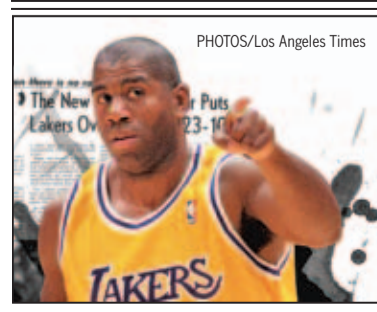
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JON-ARE BERG-JACOBSEN AFP/Getty Images

RISING ANGER IN NORWAY

Bombing and shooting suspect Anders Behring Breivik, foreground, leaves a courthouse in Oslo, where he was denied a stage on which to defend his actions as part of a bid to trigger an anti-Islamic revolution in Europe. **WORLD, A3**



PHOTOS/Los Angeles Times

MAGIC

LIVE AND IN PERSON, JULY 30
Gersten Pavilion, Loyola Marymount University

Hurry, ticket sales end July 29. Buy now.
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