

NLDS SHOWDOWN: NATIONALS TO SEND ACE AGAINST DODGERS IN GAME 5 SPORTS 1C

The Desert Sun

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016 PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK SERVING THE COACHELLA VALLEY SINCE 1927

POLICE SHOOTING: 'NIGHTMARE' IN PALM SPRINGS

'WALKED INTO A TRAP'

HESTRIN: COP KILLER USED AR-15 WITH ARMOR-PIERCING BULLETS



BRETT KELMAN AND BARRETT NEWKIRK THE DESERT SUN

A gang member used armor-piercing bullets and an AR-15 to kill two Palm Springs police officers in a planned "ambush" on Saturday, said Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin in a press conference Wednesday.

John Felix, 26, shot an assault rifle through the front door of his house, killing Officers Jose "Gil" Vega and Lasey Zerebey and wounding a third officer — all of whom were wearing bulletproof vests. Felix was captured early Sunday morning after a 12-hour standoff with police and SWAT teams.

Felix has been charged with two counts of first-degree murder and three counts of attempted murder, with enhancements filed on each charge for the use of body armor and armor-piercing bullets. Felix was also charged with illegal possession of an assault weapon and possession of a firearm.

Please see AMBUSH, 4A



Above: Officer Jose Gilbert "Gil" Vega's grandson Ruben Rodriguez cries as he talks about his grandfather during a vigil on Sunday. Top: Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin and Palm Springs Police Chief Bryan Reyes address a news conference, where Hestrin announced murder charges were filed Wednesday against the suspect.

Brother of slain cop dreams about their childhood every night

ROSALIE MURPHY THE DESERT SUN

Jose Vega keeps dreaming about his brother, Officer Jose Gilbert "Gil" Vega, a veteran police officer who family and friends knew as Gilbert or "Gil," was about to be killed in the line of duty on Saturday. Since then, Jose — the brother just older than Gilbert in their family of 10 kids — has been dreaming nightly about their childhood. The youngest of four boys, he was growing up in a town in Texas. Working in farm fields alongside their parents. Playing football. Feeling their first earthquakes. "It's kind of hard to sleep because of the dreams," Jose said.

Please see VEGA, 4A

Disgraced ex-Coachella mayor makes run for CVUSD board

JESSE MARK AND KRISTEN HWANG THE DESERT SUN

Twenty-three years ago, Jesus R. Gonzalez was indicted on felony bribery and conspiracy charges, the result of a land deal that involved his sister and developers of the property. Before his arraignment, Riverside County sheriff's deputies escorted the Coachella mayor

through the street rather than through an underground tunnel between the jail and courthouse. He was dogged by a crowd of cameras, microphones and reporters. Although years later he pleaded guilty to a sin-gle, lesser charge, Gonzalez has always

maintained his innocence, saying the charges were politically motivated. After Gonzalez completed his probation in 2002, the plea was vacated and the former mayor faded from public life — until now. In August, Gonzalez quietly filed paperwork for a seat on the Coachella Valley Unified School District board. He's running unopposed, as part of a

with three other candidates vying for four open seats on the board, and will assume office in December.

Gonzalez doesn't deny that a cloud hangs over his past, but he insists that anyone who may still harbor concerns about his fitness for office doesn't truly know him or appreciate the political climate.

Please see GONZALEZ, 5A

Empire Polo Club shines as top music fest venue

ANNA RUMER THE DESERT SUN

Country Music Festival with a gross of \$21.9 million in sales. "With an exciting lineup prepared for 2016 and a brand that simply cannot be beat, there is no reason to believe that Coachella won't also come out on top of this ranking the next time around," the listing notes.

That estimation was made before the announcement of Desert Trip, a rock mega-concert that brought together six legendary acts for two weekends of history-making shows. Concert promoter Paul Tollett of Goldenvoice told The New York Times the concert's gross was about \$160 million for both weekends, with tickets costing up to \$1,600 — by far the most expensive music festival of the year so far.

Please see EMPIRE, 5A

HI 94° LO 64°
Moody sunny and warm.
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