



WHITE JOINS
MAYA'S FIGHT
UFC boss paying
for care in L.A. **A8**

NEWS

PALMER

Tory right wing unites on issues at leadership debate **A3**

Surrey gang officers reassigned

Police on specialized team sent to new units due to staff shortages

KIM BOLAN

Surrey's specialized gang officers that collected intelligence and patrolled bars, restaurants and major events attended by gangsters

have all been reassigned. Postmedia has learned the move took place in January, before the high-profile slaying Jan. 12 of Brothers Keepers gangster Naseem Mohammed, a suspect in

other murders when he was killed. Mohammed had been staying in a Panorama Ridge house that was set on fire after he was shot. The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team is investigating. The nine gang unit officers were sent to work on extortion investigations and have now been assigned to new units as the Surrey Police Service deals with staffing

shortages. Independent MLA Elenore Sturko, a former Surrey RCMP officer, said gang cops are unique in that they come face to face with gangsters every day as they perform "duties to warn" about possible threats, knock on doors to do curfew checks and collect intelligence while out on proactive patrols. SEE GANG SQUAD ON **A4**



The women kidnapped in a violent home invasion in east Vancouver in 2023 say they found help after fleeing the car they were abandoned in and walking to this B.C. Ferries maintenance yard in Richmond. *ARLEN REDEKOP/*

SURREY

Romance-fuelled flight abroad ends in drug charges **A4**

RETROFIT

Science World's geodesic dome getting green overhaul **A6**

B.C.'s top court convicts ringleader of harrowing 2023 family abduction

SUSAN LAZARUK

The life of an east Vancouver family of four was shattered when four masked intruders demanding money smashed a ground-floor window of their home at 4 a.m. It was the start of more than two hours of a living nightmare of being bound, gagged and abducted and driven kilometres away from their home.

That morning, on March 11, 2023, seconds after the mother heard glass breaking on the first floor and had just got up to turn on the light, all four males, each holding a gun and armed with knives, burst into her and her husband's bedroom, according to a new court ruling.

One of the men pushed her onto the bed and threw a television at her head before jumping on her, grabbing her head, hair and throat and punching her. She struggled and yelled while he told her repeatedly to shut up.

The mother, who along with other family members wasn't named, was left with bruises on her face and upper body and lost several nails in the fight.

Meanwhile, another intruder stuck a gun in her husband's face and tied his hands behind his back with zap strap. He demanded cash and the key to a storage locker. The father later testified he assumed they meant to his warehouse and shop he rented in Richmond, where he and his brother repaired and stored cars.

Their two daughters, 18 and 21 at the time, were brought into the parents' bedroom, and all four were bound with zap straps and their mouths taped, according to the April 2 B.C. Supreme Court judgment convicting the ringleader, Sijuola Israel Obatusa.

He was the last of the four suspects to be convicted.

The 23-year-old had pleaded not guilty to breaking and entering and kidnapping. The prosecution case

during the eight-day trial relied on circumstantial evidence to prove Obatusa was there that night.

His co-accused included a youth who can't be named because of his age, and two adults, all of whom pleaded guilty.

"I am satisfied that the totality of the evidence, triangulated through the DNA, telephone, and identification evidence, and viewed in the light of common sense and human experience, establish the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt," wrote Justice David Crerar.

The ordeal for the family started in their two-storey home in a single-family residential area near Main Street and 35th Avenue, where the mother, who the judge said was South Asian and referred to herself and to one of the abductors as "Brown" or "Indian," was taunted with racial epithets.

One intruder threatened to shoot her daughters in front of her, Crerar wrote. SEE KIDNAPPING ON **A4**

NP

POLITICS

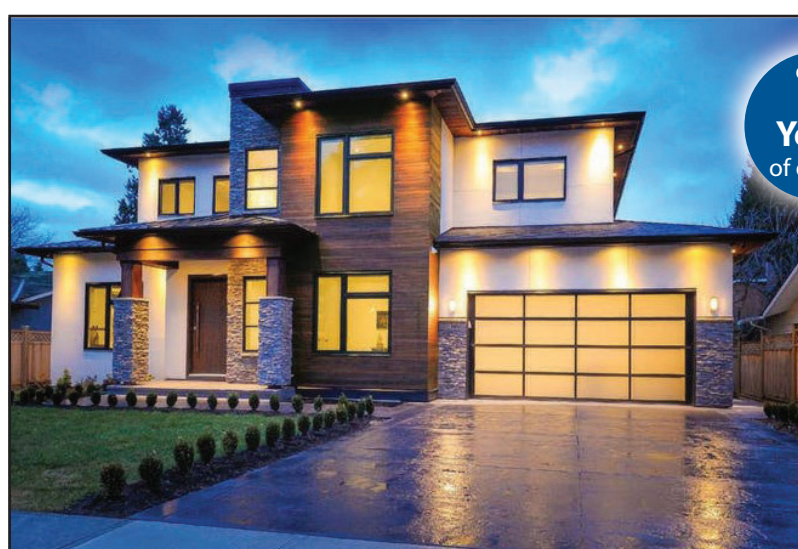
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SPORTS

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