



COURTHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

Closing Arguments

The week in Courthouse News

December 15, 2023

Mayor became payor on Friday after Rudy Giuliani was [ordered to cough up \\$148 million in a defamation case](#) brought by the two former Georgia election workers Giuliani accused of committing election fraud during the 2020 election.

Eight jurors awarded the sum to Ruby Freeman and Wandrea "Shaye" Moss [after a four-day trial](#). The mother-daughter pair [received vulgar, racist and terrifying death threats](#) after the man once known as America's Mayor went on TV and accused them of smuggling suitcases filled with fraudulent ballots into the State Farm Arena in Atlanta to steal the election for President Joe Biden. [\[Ryan Knappenberger\]](#)

"I was afraid for my life," Moss told jurors, while Freeman said she no longer uses her own name while introducing herself to neighbors, and had to take down an online store that used her name.

The jury deliberated about 10 hours before delivering its verdict against the former NYC mayor and longtime Donald Trump attorney.

Much more Courthouse News ahead.

— *Nina Pullano*

Here's what else happened in court this week:



Disney is [on defense at a San Francisco copyright trial](#), where tech company Rearden MOVA is seeking to prove that The Mouse used its facial motion-capture technology to create the lead character in the 2017 film “Beauty and the Beast.” [\[Natalie Hanson\]](#)

» The day after [the final witnesses testified](#) in Donald Trump's civil fraud trial, the former president [lost his appeal of a gag order](#) instated by the presiding New York judge. Trial is now on pause until closing arguments, set for Jan. 11, 2024. [\[Erik Uebelacker\]](#)

» SCOTUS refused to block the use of a Republican-drawn voting map in Galveston County, Texas, despite a federal judge’s finding that it violated the Voting Rights Act. [\[Kelsey Reichmann\]](#)

» It may be too late for Google to [compel some members of a class to arbitrate their claims](#) that the Google Assistant AI surreptitiously listened to their conversations for the purpose of targeted advertising. [\[Michael Gennaro\]](#)



A California judge is [likely to allow Brad Pitt's lawsuit against his ex-wife Angelina Jolie](#) to survive — if only barely. Judge Lia Martin said she was leaning toward sustaining Jolie's demurrer on seven out of nine claims. [[Hillel Aron](#)]

Top 8: This week's most-read stories

From across the Courthouse News website, including news from Capitol Hill, state legislative decisions and major research developments.

1. Second Circuit shoots down gun dealers' challenge to New York firearms law
2. Final witness delivers blistering testimony against Trump in civil fraud case
3. Federal judge rules against absentee state senators in Oregon
4. Supreme Court agrees to quick review of Trump's presidential immunity claim
5. Jonathan Majors dissuaded ex from going to doctor, unsealed texts show
6. Judge dismisses challenge over Salt River horse herd
7. Judge rips feds for pattern of abuse at Bay Area women's prison
8. López Obrador announces plan to close Mexico's national transparency agency



The mother of a man who [died in the moments after a struggle with police in July](#) — during which he said he couldn't breathe and didn't "want to be George Floyd" — sued the city of Mobile, Alabama, and two unnamed police officers claiming wrongful death. [[Gabriel Tynes](#)]

ICYMI: New cases and rulings on our radar

» **Texas v TikTok:** AUSTIN, Texas — A federal court in Texas [dismissed technology advocates' lawsuit against Texas Governor Greg Abbott and the state](#), which banned state employees from downloading the TikTok app to state-issued devices. The restriction is reasonable in light of the state's concerns over China's government collecting sensitive data from the app's users, and anyway employees can still use the app on their own devices and networks.

» **LA county antisemitism:** LA County District Attorney George Gascón [announced charges against two men](#), one who police say violently attacked an elderly Jewish couple on their way to celebrate Shabbat, and one they say drew swastikas and the Iron Cross on properties across the Southland, including an IHOP and a synagogue.

» **Public records for PETA:** SAN FRANCISCO — The Ninth Circuit [vacated a Washington federal court's injunction against the University of Washington](#), preventing it from disclosing the personal information of members of its Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee to PETA. The anonymized plaintiffs lack standing to sue, so the lower court is instructed to dismiss their lawsuit.

— *Daniel Conrad, William Dotinga*

Sidebar — a podcast from Courthouse News



In 2023, one particularly prominent figure dominated the legal news headlines. We'll give you one guess as to who it was... or, better yet, listen to the latest episode of Sidebar to find out!

Featuring the entire Sidebar team — with guest appearances by Courthouse News reporters across the nation — it's the [Big bold beautiful 2023 recap](#).

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