



## Closing Arguments

*The week in Courthouse News*

February 2, 2024

More than 20 years after Run-DMC's disc jockey was gunned down in his New York City recording studio, [federal prosecutors opened their case](#) against two men charged with his murder.

Jason Mizell, better known as Jam Master Jay, was killed in October 2002. Despite there being a handful of eyewitnesses at the scene, decades would pass before charges were filed against Karl Jordan Jr. and Ronald Washington, who both knew Mizell. (Another man, Jay Bryant, was also charged in connection with the murder last year but will be tried separately.)

One of those witnesses, Mizell's friend Tony Rincon, [told jurors this week that he didn't reveal the shooter](#), whom he identified as Jordan, because he was shocked it was someone he knew, [Nika Schoonover](#) reports.

Jordan is an artist himself — he performs under the stage name "Young Yadi" — and prosecutors sought use lyrics from two of his songs in building their case.

In one song, "Aim for the Head," Jordan raps, "we aim for the head, no body shots, and we stick around just to see the body drop." In the music video for a separate track, "Silver Spoon," Jordan raps in front of a mural commemorating Mizell.

U.S. District Judge LeShann DeArcy Hall [denied the government's request earlier this week](#), warning that courts should be wary of "overly permissive rules" allowing rap lyrics and videos to be used against criminal defendants at trial.

The judge previously applied that logic when she slammed prosecutors for including Jordan's lyrics in their detention memo.

“We can take the rap music out of the mix,” Hall said [at a hearing attended exclusively by Courthouse News](#), adding that “this is never going to be a courtroom where I penalize any individual” for engaging in the art form.

Trial will resume on Monday in the Eastern District of New York.

Much more Courthouse News ahead.

— [Nina Pullano](#)

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## Here's what else happened in court this week:



The Supreme Court [refused West Point's emergency appeal](#) asking the court to apply its ruling gutting affirmative action ruling to military academies. [[Kelsey Reichmann](#)]

» Joshua Schulte, a former CIA programmer, [was sentenced to 40 years in prison](#) on espionage charges for the largest leak in agency history, in addition to child pornography convictions. [[Josh Russell](#)]

» A federal judge [threw out Disney's lawsuit](#) claiming Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Legislature replaced a pro-Disney development oversight board with one of the governor's choosing after The Mouse criticized the state's "Don't Say Gay" law. [[Alex Pickett](#)]

» In New York, a federal jury [cleared Sotheby's of liability in a long-running international dispute](#) between the art auction house and a Russian billionaire over sales including that of a 500-year-old da Vinci painting of Jesus Christ. [[Josh Russell](#)]



The Los Angeles trial against Rebecca Grossman, who's accused of vehicular manslaughter in a hit-and-run that left two young boys dead, [continued with the emotional testimony of children's mother](#). [[Hillel Aron](#)]

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## 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. [Kat Von D wins trial over unlicensed use of Miles Davis photo for tattoo](#)
2. [Judge permanently blocks California ammo background check law](#)
3. [Evidence dispute halts manslaughter trial for school shooter's mom](#)
4. [Special prosecutor in Trump election interference case dodges testimony about improper relationship](#)
5. [Trial of Rebecca Grossman, wealthy woman accused of killing two boys with her car, gets underway](#)
6. [\[Brief\] Air Force One fire](#)
7. [Federal judge dumps pyramid scheme lawsuit against Trump](#)
8. [Details of voting equipment breach emerge in Dominion security trial](#)



In arguments at the Sixth Circuit, Tennessee [asked the appellate court to reinstate its ban on drag shows](#), prompting judges to ask whether the law against "adult-oriented performances" extends to people's homes. [\[David Wells\]](#)

The same court [also heard arguments from an Ohio school district](#) defending its policy that requires students to use their trans peers' preferred pronouns. [\[Andy Monserud\]](#)

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## **ICYMI: New cases and rulings on our radar**

» **Meta and medical privacy:** SAN FRANCISCO — A federal court in California [denied Meta's motion to dismiss a class action](#) alleging its advertising tracking tool, Pixel, breached users' medical privacy. The class representatives voluntarily withdrew their claims under California's Consumers Legal Remedies Act, however.

» **ChatGPT-faked caselaw:** MANHATTAN — The Second Circuit [chastised attorney Jae Lee for using ChatGPT to assist in generating her brief](#) to the Second Circuit after the AI tool cited a nonexistent case as precedent for her argument before the panel. Lee is referred to the court's grievance panel because "this conduct falls well below the basic obligations of counsel."

» **Health care refund:** SEATTLE — Providence Health [must forgive and repay \\$157 million to thousands of low-income Washingtonians](#) it unlawfully billed for medical treatment, Washington state's attorney general said in an announcement. Providence deceived patients by not letting them know about a state law that requires hospitals to provide financial assistance to those who qualify.

» **George & Tammy & George:** WILMINGTON, De. — The heirs of legendary country music producer George Richey claim Showtime hired George Jones and Tammy Wynette's daughter Georgette for a series about her famous parents and [she disparaged Richey despite an agreement not to do so](#).

— *Daniel Conrad, William Dottinga, Candace Cheung*

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## **Sidebar — a podcast from Courthouse News**



Move over, Nancy Drew. [The internet sleuth is here to stay.](#)

In the latest episode of Sidebar, the team breaks down the rise of hobby investigators and how they've contributed to today's true crime ecosystem — from tracking Gabby Petito's high-profile disappearance in real time to the Austin, Texas, serial killer that wasn't.

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