

Plus: Why politicians can block you on Facebook without violating the First Amendment



# COURTHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

## Closing Arguments

*The week in Courthouse News*

March 15, 2024

The fraught social media platform of the week decidedly was TikTok; the House [passed a bipartisan measure demanding it divest](#) from its parent company, as [Benjamin S. Weiss](#) reports, and ex-Treasury chief Steve Mnuchin says he's putting together a proposal to [buy the app](#).

Not long ago, though, a different T-word in the social media game (its mascot was a little blue bird) fueled our national angst — along the way [stirring up defamation drama and big legal questions](#): Can you sue somebody for being mean to you online? What if it's a joke? What if it's funny? What if it's not?

Twitter has a new name these days, but the litigation it had inspired endures. In the latest episode of Sidebar, co-hosts [Hillel Aron](#) and [Amanda Pampuro](#) get into a long-running feud between two Los Angeles eviction lawyers; the lawsuit over Elon Musk's infamous “pedo guy” tweet; and former Representative Devin Nunes taking on his Twitter trolls.

Listen to “Mean Tweets” on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#) or our [website](#).

We've got a heap of Courthouse News ahead.

— [Nina Pullano](#)

Here's what else happened in court this week:



Special prosecutor Nathan Wade withdrew from the Georgia election interference case against Donald Trump after the presiding judge ordered [District Attorney Fani Willis either to recuse herself or remove Wade](#), finding an “appearance of impropriety.”

Earlier in the week, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee [struck down six counts from the 41-count indictment](#) against Trump and others. [[Megan Butler](#)]

In other Trump trial news, the former president's New York criminal trial was [delayed from March 25 until at least mid-April](#) after Trump requested more time to sift through newly released evidence (and NYC prosecutors [didn't push back](#)). [[Erik Uebelacker](#)]

» Jurors [convicted James Crumbley](#), the father of Michigan school shooter Ethan Crumbley, on four counts of manslaughter after [12 hours of deliberation](#). [[Dave Byrnes](#)]

» The parents of Ukrainian journalist Oleksandra “Sasha” Kuvshynova, who was killed by Russian fire while reporting on the front lines of the Eastern European

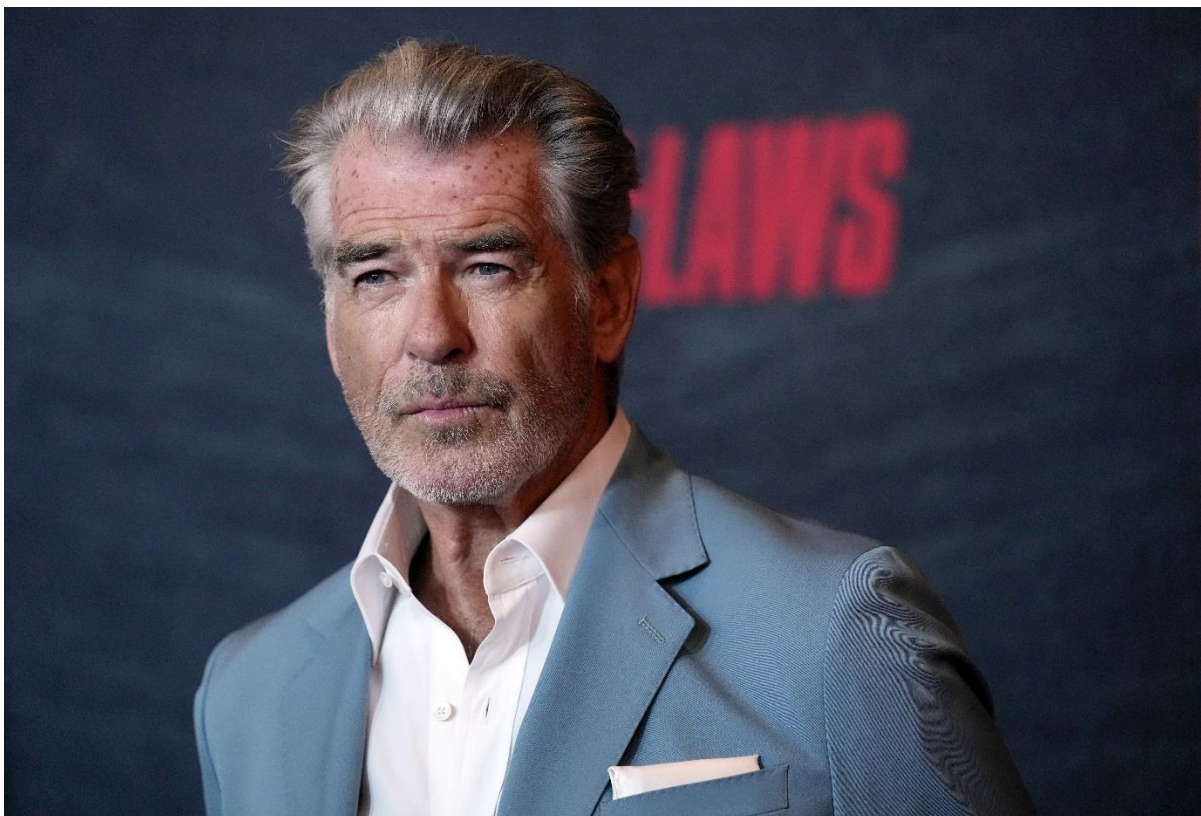
conflict for Fox News, [sued the network, accusing it of ignoring safety precautions](#) and losing track of reporters. [[Erik Uebelacker](#)]

» A federal judge [approved the final part of a class action settlement with Juul Labs](#) and its parent company Altria, bringing the total settlement to just over \$300 million. [[Hillel Aron](#)]

» In San Francisco, a group of authors [sued technology giant Nvidia](#) saying the company used pirated versions of their copyrighted work to train its artificial intelligence platform. [[Michael Gennaro](#)]

» The Supreme Court [ruled that politicians can block members of the public](#) from their social media pages without violating the First Amendment. [[Kelsey Reichmann](#)]

» Uber and Lyft [threatened to stop doing business in Minnesota's two largest cities](#) and the surrounding suburbs in response to a city council vote to approve minimum pay rates for drivers. [[Andy Monserud](#)]



"James Bond" actor Pierce Brosnan [pleaded guilty to a charge of foot travel in a thermal area](#) at Yellowstone National Park. He'd shared the indiscretion with his two million social media followers. [[Andrew J. Nelson](#)]

### *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. [Judge guts Leah Remini's harassment lawsuit against Church of Scientology](#)
2. [Federal judge upholds Washington state firearm distribution law](#)
3. [Arizona Senate committee moves to restrict SNAP benefits](#)
4. [New York AG urges appellate court to make Trump post entire bond in \\$454 million fraud judgment](#)
5. [Asylum-seeking moms claim they were expelled to Mexico a day after giving birth](#)
6. [Text poll finds Boebert favored but vulnerable in Colorado's 4th Congressional District](#)
7. [\[January 2012\] Bipolar Man's Death by Taser Needs Jury Trial](#)
8. [Party-line split in public opinion of US Supreme Court seen for first time](#)





Modelo [asked a Second Circuit to revive its claims](#) that Constellation Brands overstepped its contract with the Mexican beer company when it marketed hard seltzers as Modelo and Corona products. [[Nika Schoonover](#)]

*ICYMI: New cases and rulings on our radar*

» **\$6M Tesla settlement:** SAN FRANCISCO — A federal court in California [granted final approval of a \\$6 million settlement with Tesla](#) over its solar roof customers' claims that they were forced into paying more for the roofs after they were installed. The terms include \$1.5 million in attorney fees.

» **Gaza protest fallout:** NEW YORK — Columbia University unfairly sanctioned two student groups that helped stage a pro-Palestinian rally in November 2023, violating the school's own disciplinary code, [members say](#). The university did not suspend other groups participating in the protest.

» **Shoddy detective work:** ATLANTA — The 11th Circuit [found that a Georgia federal court should not have ruled in favor of a detective](#) sued for arresting a citizen, resulting in a year of jail time, for the murders of his mother and stepfather. The detective, in the arrest warrant affidavit, did not include the fact that the mother and stepfather weren't killed until at least seven hours after the son was last inside the house; if this fact were reported, the affidavit would not have established arguable probable cause for the arrest.

— *Daniel Conrad, Audrey Rodeman*

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