

The animal game, Romania's election strife, terrorism charges, and climate change accountability



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Closing Arguments

The week in Courthouse News

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“As lawmakers push forward with digital betting rules, a national debate over how to handle a game hidden in plain sight rages on,” writes Brazilian reporter [Marília Marasciulo](#) in this week’s [deep dive](#) into *jogo do bicho*, Rio de Janeiro's animal game.

A lottery invented by a zookeeper in 1892, the game asks individuals to bet on one of 25 animals, with the winner originally given a \$35 prize. Today the game is played online with bets recorded on an app, paying out as much as \$40,000.

But playing the game is a gamble in and of itself, with a 1941 law levying prison time and hefty fines up to \$424,000 for operators and \$42,500 for gamblers caught playing.

Whether Brazilian lawmakers legalize the game and channel related fees into much needed infrastructure remains to be seen. One thing that is certain is that locals have no intention of ceasing to sneak in plays at the century-old game.

Life is a gamble, but often so are court cases. Read on to see the cards being dealt to courts near and far.

-Amanda Pampuro

Here's what else happened in court this week:



Around the world: A dark horse Romanian ultranationalist candidate whose lead prompted the nation to annul its most recent presidential election now faces possible criminal charges [related](#) to a shadowy TikTok-driven campaign supported by Russians. Germans are also calling for a [new election](#) following their chancellor's loss in a confidence vote. [[Cain Burdeau](#), [Dave Braneck](#)]

Meanwhile, a Romanian "influencer" judge [defended](#) his popular Facebook posts at a top European rights court while anger boiled over in France [following](#) the sentences in a mass rape case. Closer to home, a SoCal political campaign manager was [arrested](#) under suspicion of spying for China. [Molly Quell, Lily Radziemski, [Matt Simons](#)]

» Manhattan prosecutors [secured](#) a grand jury indictment supporting terrorism charges against Luigi Mangione, the 26-year-old man accused of murdering UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson. After dropping his extradition challenge, Mangione was [transferred](#) to New York where he received [additional](#) federal charges. [[Erik Uebelacker](#)]

» A former North Carolina Oath Keeper who was in close contact with the far-right militia's leader Stewart Rhodes in the lead-up to the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol riot, was [sentenced](#) to one year of home confinement. [[Ryan Knappenberger](#)]

» Defense attorneys [kicked](#) off their case in the ongoing federal corruption trial of ex-Illinois House Speaker Mike Madigan after the government [read](#) a final factual stipulation to jurors. [Dave Byrnes]

» Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton [filed](#) a last-minute motion to block the testimony of death row inmate Robert Roberson, who says he was convicted of a crime that doesn't exist, and was subpoenaed to testify before state lawmakers. [[Christina van Waasbergen](#)]



The Montana Supreme Court sided with 16 young [climate activists](#) who claim the state's environmental laws [violated](#) their constitutional right to a clean, healthy climate, upholding their August 2023 [victory](#) in a first-of-its-kind decision that could pave the way for more youth-led climate lawsuits. [[Matt Simons](#)]

Top 8: What you've been reading

1. [Motorcyclists push Seventh Circuit to reopen antitrust suit against Harley-Davidson](#)
2. [Fourth Circuit nominee out after Dems cut deal on Biden judges](#)

3. [Chicago's new top prosecutor, backed by police, offers hints she could retain parts of progressive agenda](#)
4. [California lawmaker urges state to rescind all calls for constitutional convention](#)
5. [Democrats sound off after Third Circuit nominee Mangi takes Senate to task](#)
6. [Trump lawyer who orchestrated fake elector scheme in Wisconsin claims political oppression](#)
7. [Yearslong legal battle between NRA and NY attorney general ends with final compliance judgment](#)
8. [En banc Ninth Circuit takes up issue of gun rights for nonviolent convicted felons](#)



A New York judge [declined](#) to toss President-elect Donald Trump's hush money conviction, and a Georgia Court of Appeals panel [removed](#) Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis from prosecuting a 2020 election interference case against Trump. [[Erik Uebelacker](#), [Megan Butler](#)]

Rulings on our radar 

» **District of Northern Texas:** The Anti-Defamation League did not [defame](#) influencer QAnon John when it accused him of spreading antisemitic beliefs, but per the organization's glossary, may have crossed the line in calling him a "dangerous extremist."

» **District of Colorado:** A group that built a miles-long fence through the San Juan National Forest to mark the land for the "Free Land Holders" can be [served](#) via publication by U.S. attorneys who were unable to reach members by phone.

» **District of Massachusetts:** A gun manufacturer and the city of Cambridge lost motions for summary [judgment](#) on the lawsuit brought by a policeman who claims he was denied promotions after speaking publicly about his P320 pistol's safety issues and an unintentional discharge.

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