

# Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

## Smith details Trump ‘deceit’

Filing: Ex-president ‘resorted to crimes’ to maintain power

By Eric Tucker and Alanna Durkin Richer  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Then-President Donald Trump laid the groundwork to try to overturn the 2020 election even before he lost, knowingly pushed false claims of voter fraud and “resorted to crimes” in his failed bid to cling to power, according to a newly unsealed court filing from prosecutors that lays out fresh details from the landmark criminal case against the former president.

The filing from special counsel Jack Smith’s team offers the most comprehensive view to date of what prosecutors intend to prove if the case charging Trump with conspiring to overturn the election reaches trial.

Though a monthslong congressional investigation and the indictment itself have chronicled in detail Trump’s efforts to undo the election, the new filing cites previously unknown accounts offered by Trump’s closest aides to paint a portrait of an “increasingly desperate” president who while losing his grip on the White House “used deceit to target every stage of the electoral process.”

“So what?” the filing quotes Trump as telling an aide after being alerted that his vice president, Mike Pence, was in potential danger after violent supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

“The details don’t matter,” Trump said, when told by an adviser that a lawyer who was mounting his legal challenges wouldn’t be able to prove the false allegations in court, the filing states.

The brief was made public over the Trump legal team’s objections in the final month of a closely contested presidential race in which Democrats have sought to make Trump’s

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### KILLING OF OFFICER CLIFTON LEWIS

# CONVICTION VACATED FOR LAST DEFENDANT

Amid allegations of prosecutorial misconduct in 2011 case, Villa will be released from prison

Emotions high at tense hearing where family of 36-year-old said they never gave up hope



Family members of Alexander Villa, including his grandmother Bernadina Gabriella, and other supporters celebrate Wednesday in Chicago after a judge vacated the case against Villa, who was convicted of killing Chicago police Officer Clifton Lewis in 2011. **ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

By Madeline Buckley  
Chicago Tribune

During a tense hearing in front of a packed courtroom on Wednesday afternoon, a Cook County judge ordered a new trial for a man convicted of killing Chicago police Officer Clifton Lewis in 2011, after prosecutors agreed to a defense request amid allegations of prosecutorial misconduct.

Prosecutors told the court they don’t intend to retry Alexander Villa, 36, meaning that the Chicago man will be released from prison nearly 13 years after Lewis was shot just after Christmas by masked men while working security at a West Side convenience store.

Emotions ran high during the proceedings before Judge Carol

Howard, with attorneys sharply criticizing the handling of the case by police and the original prosecutors who, they alleged, hid potentially exculpatory evidence. Family members for Lewis in turn said they are left without justice for the brutal slaying, as the case no longer has any charged defendants.

“It’s a sad moment because there’s two victims,” Villa’s sister, Melissa Villa, said after the hearing. “You have a person who was wrongfully incarcerated ... and you have a family that is suffering the loss of their loved ones. No one wins.”

After the hearing, Villa’s family said they never gave up hope they would bring Villa home, while members of the Fraternal Order of Police demanded that Eileen O’Neill Burke, the likely winner

of November’s election for state’s attorney, retry Villa or else lose any chance of support from the police union.

In a statement, the Cook County state’s attorney’s office said that after Villa was sentenced, it “discovered evidence that had not been previously or timely provided to the defense.” It said it is “actively working to learn from the chain of events” to ensure it does not happen again.

“This information is potentially exculpatory, material, and relevant to a jury’s evaluation of the case, and therefore, we are compelled to agree to vacate this conviction and dismiss the charges,” the statement said. “We acknowledge the pain and frustration this

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Two masked men fatally shot Officer Clifton Lewis days after Christmas in 2011 while he was working security at a convenience store. **CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## Historians in Glencoe strip name from home

First owner of cottage designed and gifted by Wright had racist past

By Daniel I. Dorfman  
Pioneer Press

The Glencoe Historical Society has removed the name of Sherman Booth from a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed cottage after discovering the wide-ranging extent of Booth’s racist efforts to reduce the number of Black residents, as well as Italian and Greek residents, from Glencoe roughly 100 years ago by using racially restrictive real estate covenants.

The cottage, in Glencoe’s Ravine Bluffs neighborhood, was designed by the noted architect Wright as a gift to Booth, his friend and attorney. The historical society took possession of



The Glencoe Historical Society has renamed this Frank Lloyd Wright cottage the Ravine Bluffs Cottage after discovering original owner Sherman Booth, whose name the cottage bore for about a century, masterminded racist covenants to keep Black, Italian and Greek residents out of the town. **STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

the structure in 2020 to protect it from demolition.

“The ultimate and intended impact of Booth’s action was to drive away Black and Italian residents and to effectively prevent them from returning,” the historical society’s board of directors said in a statement.

Historical Society officials said they were previously aware of the large decline in Glencoe’s Black population in the 1920s, but they were not aware of Booth’s role until the completion of research

for the society’s ongoing “Blacks in Glencoe” exhibit.

“We cannot change our history, but we are committed to truthfully reporting it and learning from the mistakes of those who came before us,” the statement said.

The officials’ statement called Booth the “racist original owner” of the cottage, which the society has renamed the Ravine Bluffs Cottage.

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### MADIGAN TRIAL

# Judge denies bid to toss out key charges

By Jason Meisner and Megan Crepeau  
Chicago Tribune

A federal judge on Wednesday denied a motion to toss out key charges against former House Speaker Michael Madigan in light of the U.S. Supreme Court’s recent ruling tightening the federal bribery statute.

In his written ruling, U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey said the indictment “explicitly alleges that Madigan performed official acts related to legislation affecting ComEd in exchange for ComEd’s hiring of certain individuals,” and therefore clears the bar imposed by the high court, which said “gratuities,” or rewards given to a politician after the fact, are not criminalized under the law.

The ruling meant it’s full steam ahead for the highly anticipated

trial, which gets underway with jury selection at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse next week. During a pretrial hearing Wednesday, attorneys for both sides spent hours hashing out objections over evidence, including portions of wiretapped calls and video-recorded meetings that the defense claims would be prejudicial.

Among the tapes the defense wants excluded is a portion of a December 2017 videotaped meeting between Madigan’s longtime confidant and now co-defendant, Michael McClain, and then-Ald. Daniel Solis, who was secretly cooperating with the FBI. While the recording has previously been outlined in pretrial findings, many of the details were revealed for the first time as the parties discussed it in court.

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**TODAY’S WEATHER** High 80 Low 62

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Business, Page 14

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere  
177th year No. 277 © Chicago Tribune



*“It is certainly something we are not proud of and we acknowledge and we are committed to diversity and inclusion and condemn the practices he did at the time. In no way do we want to prevent the community from understanding the history.” — Park Board President Carol Spain*