

# Chicago Tribune



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LA SCHIAZZA TRIAL

## Feds: Madigan's power 'no secret'

Opening statements kick off federal case against ex-AT&T boss accused of bribing former speaker

By Jason Meisner  
Chicago Tribune

AT&T Illinois had tried for years to win powerful House Speaker Michael Madigan's support for a bill ending mandated landline service, but it wasn't until the company's president agreed to

secretly pay thousands of dollars to a Madigan associate for a do-nothing contract that the deal got done, federal prosecutors told a jury Wednesday.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a case about a corporate executive paying off the most powerful politician in Illinois to help pass his

company's prized piece of legislation," Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul Mower said in his opening statement in the bribery trial of former AT&T Illinois President Paul La Schiazza.

The trial is the latest chapter in the blockbuster federal investigation of Madigan and his once-vaunted 13th Ward political operation, a probe that helped put an end to Madigan's record run as both the leader of the House and

the state Democratic Party.

While Madigan was not physically in court Wednesday, prosecutors wasted no time putting his smiling driver's license photo on display as Mower walked the jury through the vast influence the Democratic leader wielded for decades in the state legislature.

"That power was no secret — including to the defendant," Mower said, displaying emails where La Schiazza himself

referred to the speaker as "King Madigan" and told colleagues, "Everyone in the system is beholden to the Speaker...he rules the House with an iron fist."

So when Madigan's right-hand man, Michael McClain, came to AT&T in early 2017 and asked them to kick some money to former state Rep. Edward Acevedo, a longtime Madigan acolyte, La Schiazza

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## Trump Tower faces fines

Building violated river protections, county judge rules

By Adriana Pérez  
Chicago Tribune

After several years of litigation, a Cook County judge has found operations at Trump Tower violated state and federal environmental laws that protect the fish in the Chicago River, the Illinois attorney general's office announced Wednesday.

"The Chicago River is one of our city's most treasured natural resources, providing opportunities for recreation and commerce," Attorney General Kwame Raoul said in a statement. "For years, Trump Tower failed to follow state and federal regulations that protect the health of the Chicago River and the balance of critical aquatic ecosystems therein. All entities — no matter who they are — must be held accountable when they willfully disregard our laws. I am pleased with this decision, and I am committed to continuing to vigorously enforce our environmental laws."

Cook County Circuit Judge Thaddeus L. Wilson on Monday granted summary judgment to the plaintiffs, finding Trump International Hotel & Tower at 401 N. Wabash Ave. liable on all counts. This means there will be no trial. Raoul's office is seeking civil penalties and injunctive relief, to be

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Former Chicago police Officer Carlos Yanez Jr. is consoled by loved ones, including his father, Carlos Yanez Sr., second from right, while speaking after the sentencing of Emonte Morgan for the killing of Yanez Jr.'s partner, Officer Ella French. **CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

## Life in prison for man who killed cop, injured another

Emotions boil over at sentencing for 24-year-old who shot two officers during traffic stop in 2021

By Sam Charles and Madeline Buckley  
Chicago Tribune

A judge sentenced a man to life in prison Wednesday for shooting and killing Chicago police Officer Ella French and injuring her partner, marking an emotional end to the case months after jurors viewed harrowing body-camera footage throughout a weeklong trial.

Emonte Morgan, 24, was found guilty in March of killing French, seriously injuring Officer Carlos Yanez Jr. and shooting at Officer Joshua Blas during a traffic stop on Aug. 7, 2021, on the South Side. Life was the statutory minimum in the case, prosecutors had told Judge Ursula Walowski, who added another 57 years on other counts.

"Your actions turned this into what it is today," Walowski said.

"You made these decisions. You pulled the trigger."

French, 29, was gunned down after she and her partners pulled over a vehicle — occupied by Morgan, his brother, Eric Morgan, and a woman Eric Morgan was dating — around 63rd Street and Bell Avenue. The shooting rattled the city and Police Department, and her police work elicited praise in many corners across the city.

Walowski handed down the sentence after family members gave emotional victim-impact statements in a room full of police officers. Emonte Morgan's

defense had argued for a 40-year prison term.

French's mother, Elizabeth French, thanked the prosecutors and investigators in the case, as well as Walowski, before describing the pain she's felt every day for more than three years.

Photos of her daughter's childhood — her as a baby, receiving her first communion, graduating high school — can be painful reminders, she said.

"The memories, they sneak up on me sometimes, and I am filled

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Vice President Kamala Harris, President Joe Biden, former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, former President Donald Trump and Sen. JD Vance, R-Ohio, attend the 9/11 victims' memorial ceremony Wednesday in New York. **YUKI IWAMURA/AP**

## Politics set aside for 9/11 anniversary

By Jennifer Peltz and Karen Matthews  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — With presidential candidates looking on, some 9/11 victims' relatives appealed to them Wednesday for accountability as the U.S. marked an anniversary laced with election-season politics.

In a remarkable tableau, President Joe Biden, former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris stood together at ground zero just hours after Trump and Harris faced off in their first-ever debate. Trump and Biden — the successor whose

inauguration Trump skipped — shook hands, and former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg appeared to facilitate a handshake between Harris and Trump.

Then the presidential rivals stood only a few feet apart, Biden and Bloomberg between them, as the observance began with the tolling of a bell and a moment of silence. At Trump's side was his running mate, Sen. JD Vance.

The image was one of putting politics aside at another solemn commemoration of the hijacked-plane attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001. For years, politicians have been only observers at ground zero

commemorations, the microphones going instead to relatives who read victims' names aloud.

Some of those readers took the occasion Wednesday to deliver political messages of their own.

"We are pleading for your help, but you ignore us," Allison Walsh-DiMarzio said, directly challenging Trump and Harris to press Saudi Arabia about any Saudi official involvement in the attacks. Most of the 19 hijackers were Saudi, but the kingdom denies involvement by senior Saudi officials.

"Which one of you will have the courage to be our hero? We deserve

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### A 'piece of Mexico' restored

A majestic arch above 26th Street serving as a gateway to Little Village, the largest Mexican community in the city, will "stand the test of time" following renovations. **Page 2**

### Police, fire exempt from freeze

Following backlash, Mayor Brandon Johnson announced Wednesday that a hiring freeze across city government would not apply to police and fire employees. **Page 7**

### In debate, two visions of US

Former President Donald Trump's America is a grim place and Vice President Kamala Harris' is weary but hopeful. Whose vision resonates? **Analysis in Nation & World**

