

Chicago Tribune



QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-TRIBUNE

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

A double murder trial like no other

Sentence commuted in decades-old case, but twists keep on coming

By Megan Crepeau
Chicago Tribune

In the long and tangled history of Cook County courts, there has never been a case quite like Gerald Reed's.

Reed, 60, slim and stern-faced, is set to stand trial Monday on charges of committing a gruesome double murder. In itself, that is not unusual.

But due to a complicated string of circumstances — possibly unprecedented and definitely perplexing — if he is convicted of the killings, he cannot go to prison for them.

The evidence against him is more than three decades old. The case unfolded in the notorious Jon Burge era. Reed, who has for years accused police of beating him into a false confession, was long ago found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. Since then his conviction was reversed, then reinstated; then he was ultimately ordered to stand trial anew — without the use of the tainted confession.

And amid the muddle of court fights, Gov. J.B. Pritzker commuted Reed's sentence, meaning he cannot serve one more moment of prison time on the case. After Reed was freed, he was picked up on new charges out of state — so at the end of the trial, he will go back behind bars, but not for the murder.

"From a practical standpoint, I think it's kind of crazy to try someone when they can't go to jail anymore," said attorney Elliot Zinger, who has represented Reed for more than a decade. "... In some ways I'm happy about it, because I'm ready for a finding of not guilty."

Robert Milan, the special prosecutor spearheading the retrial, declined to comment, saying Circuit Judge Steven Watkins, who is presiding over the trial, warned attorneys against speaking publicly about the case.

But during a 2021 court hearing, Milan was adamant that taking Reed back to trial is the right thing to do.

"We can't send him back to prison, we know that," he said. "But we're not going to let him walk. We're not going to pretend he didn't kill these two people."

Turn to Trial, Page 3

US works to avert escalation over Iran

The United States highlighted its role in helping Israel thwart Iran's attack as President Joe Biden convened leaders of the Group of Seven nations in an effort to prevent a wider escalation. **Nation & World**

Scheffler wins his second Masters

Scottie Scheffler shot a final-round 68 at Augusta National to win his second green jacket in three years, a four-shot victory over Ludvig Aberg of Sweden. **Chicago Sports**



MATT SLOCUM/AP



People grieve at the scene Sunday after Ariana Molina, 9, was shot and killed Saturday evening during a family celebration in front of their home in the 2000 block of West 52nd Street in Chicago's New City neighborhood. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE PHOTOS**

9-year-old girl killed, 10 injured in shooting

Gunfire sprays crowd at Southwest Side family's outdoor confirmation party

By Brian Cassella and Avani Kalra
Chicago Tribune

A 9-year-old girl was killed and 10 others were injured in a shooting Saturday evening in Chicago's New City neighborhood, police and the girl's father said Sunday.

Chicago Police Department officers responded to West 52nd Street and South Damen Avenue after an alert on ShotSpotter, a network of sensors that reports gunshot noises, detected shots fired around 9:18 p.m. Three children were injured and three people remain in critical condition, police said.

Jose Molina said his daughter, Ariana Molina, 9, died from a gunshot wound to the head

after being transported to a nearby hospital. Molina said his family had gathered in the front yard of the family home for his sister's confirmation and were about to cut the cake when shots were fired. He said he found his daughter lying in the grass. Police reports gave the girl's age as 8.

"Ariana loved to play around," Molina said. "She used to like to do braids, and she loved her brothers. She was just a wonderful girl."

Molina said he suffered a gunshot to the foot, and his wife was hospitalized after a gunshot to her shoulder. His two nephews and his son's two god-siblings were also shot Saturday night.

Turn to Shooting, Page 2



Jose Molina, left, mourns with family and neighbors Sunday after his daughter Ariana was shot and killed Saturday evening.



Attendees acknowledge Henderson Yarbrough during the funeral of his wife, Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough, at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago on Sunday. **EILEEN T. MESLAR/TRIBUNE**

Hundreds gather to remember Cook County Clerk Yarbrough

Top Democrats laud 'courageous' trailblazer in state, local politics

By Christy Gutowski
Chicago Tribune

A collection of politicians, community activists, family, friends and co-workers filled a majestic University of Chicago

chapel Sunday to say goodbye to the late Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough and remember her trailblazing spirit.

Hundreds gathered inside Rockefeller Memorial Chapel on the university's Hyde Park campus to bid farewell to Yarbrough, a fixture in state and local Democratic Party politics who died April 7 with more than two years left in her second term

in office.

Yarbrough, 73, had been hospitalized at the time, battling an undisclosed medical condition.

Amid stories about her compassion and determination, Yarbrough was eulogized Sunday at a public funeral replete with the tributes bestowed upon an elected public official who

Turn to Yarbrough, Page 5

US SUPREME COURT

Case could shape state corruption probes

Ruling on bribery law may have implications for Madigan proceedings

By Jason Meisner and Amy Lavalley
Chicago Tribune

Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan was the state's most powerful politician in 2018 when he allegedly met at his downtown Chicago law office with then-Ald. Danny Solis to discuss Solis' appointment to a lucrative state board position.

Solis, who unbeknownst to Madigan was an FBI mole, made it clear he'd helped bring law business to Madigan and wanted something in return once he retired from City Hall, perhaps a position with the Commerce Commission or Labor Relations Board, which Solis said were both "very generous in their compensation," according to federal prosecutors.

"Don't worry about it," Madigan allegedly said during the conversation, which was secretly being

Turn to Court, Page 5

