



Office of the State's Attorney
Madison County, Illinois
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Early-career prosecutors secure jury trial conviction in aggravated assault case

Edwardsville, IL — Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine announced Wednesday that a jury has returned a guilty verdict in an aggravated assault case prosecuted by two assistant state's attorneys who have been licensed for less than a year and a half.

The trial, which began Monday in Circuit Court, was prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney Jerren Fulcher and Assistant State's Attorney Zac Cato. After just two hours of deliberation, the jury found the defendant guilty of aggravated assault for pointing a firearm toward a juvenile, without justification.

While felony cases often make headlines, Haine emphasized that his office is committed to developing trial experience at all levels of prosecution.

"We are dedicated to providing our attorneys—whether they are new to the practice or seasoned professionals—with real opportunities to handle cases in court. Even recent graduates, like Fulcher and Cato, are ready to get to work and practice trial advocacy through real cases," Haine said.

The State's Attorney's Office prosecutes more than 3,000 misdemeanor cases annually, and each of these cases is treated with the seriousness it deserves, Haine said.

Haine also commended Assistant State's Attorney Morgan Hudson, Chief of the Criminal Division, highlighting her role in mentoring and providing hands-on training to new prosecutors.

"Morgan Hudson's leadership and dedication to training our young prosecutors is invaluable," Haine added. "She ensures they learn practical courtroom skills and develop the confidence they need to succeed. Fulcher's and Cato's success in securing this conviction demonstrates the high level of training and mentorship within the office, preparing young attorneys for complex cases from the early stages of their careers."

Fulcher, a graduate of University of Missouri School of Law, and Cato, a graduate of Southern Illinois University School of Law, joined the State's Attorney's Office in the latter half of 2023.

Associate Judge Justin Zimmerman presided over the trial. The defendant will be sentenced at a later date, with the offense carrying a maximum penalty of one year in jail.