

# Chicago Tribune



\$5.75 | SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2026 | CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

TRIBUNE INVESTIGATION

## 1 plastic surgeon, 8 women dead

Despite multiple fatalities and a \$56M jury verdict, state allows Dr. Ayoub Sayeg to keep operating

By Christy Gutowski and Gregory Royal Pratt  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Dr. Ayoub Sayeg's ads have an appealing ring to budget-minded consumers: "Most Affordable Plastic Surgery Center in Chicago. Period."

His social media, website and occasional billboards offer discount prices for those seeking "confident curves," including perkier breasts, flatter tummies and plumper butts.

Amid the promotional vouchers, financing options and before-and-

after photos, potential patients are assured they are in safe hands. The board-certified plastic surgeon says on his website he has performed more than 45,000 procedures in his 25-year medical career.

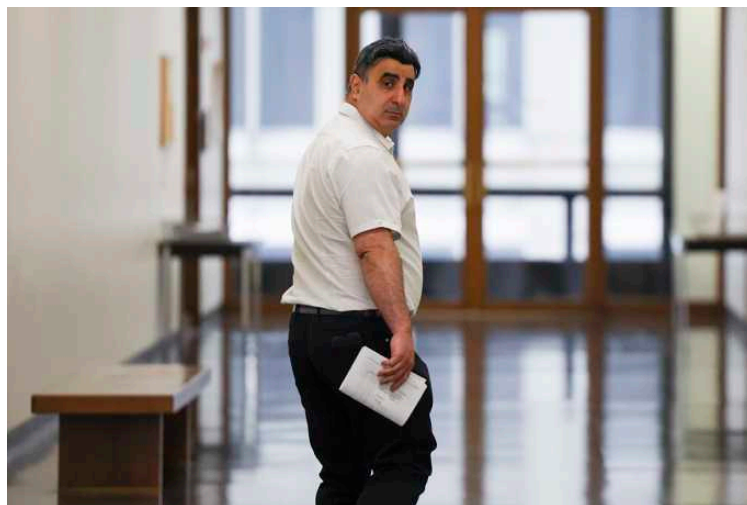
"As an accredited surgical facility, we take extra steps for patient safety," his website promises. "Your happiness is our mission!"

But a Tribune investigation has found eight of Sayeg's patients — all of them women of color — died in a seven-year span shortly after their surgeries at 63 Laser & Skin Clinic, located in a predominantly Latino

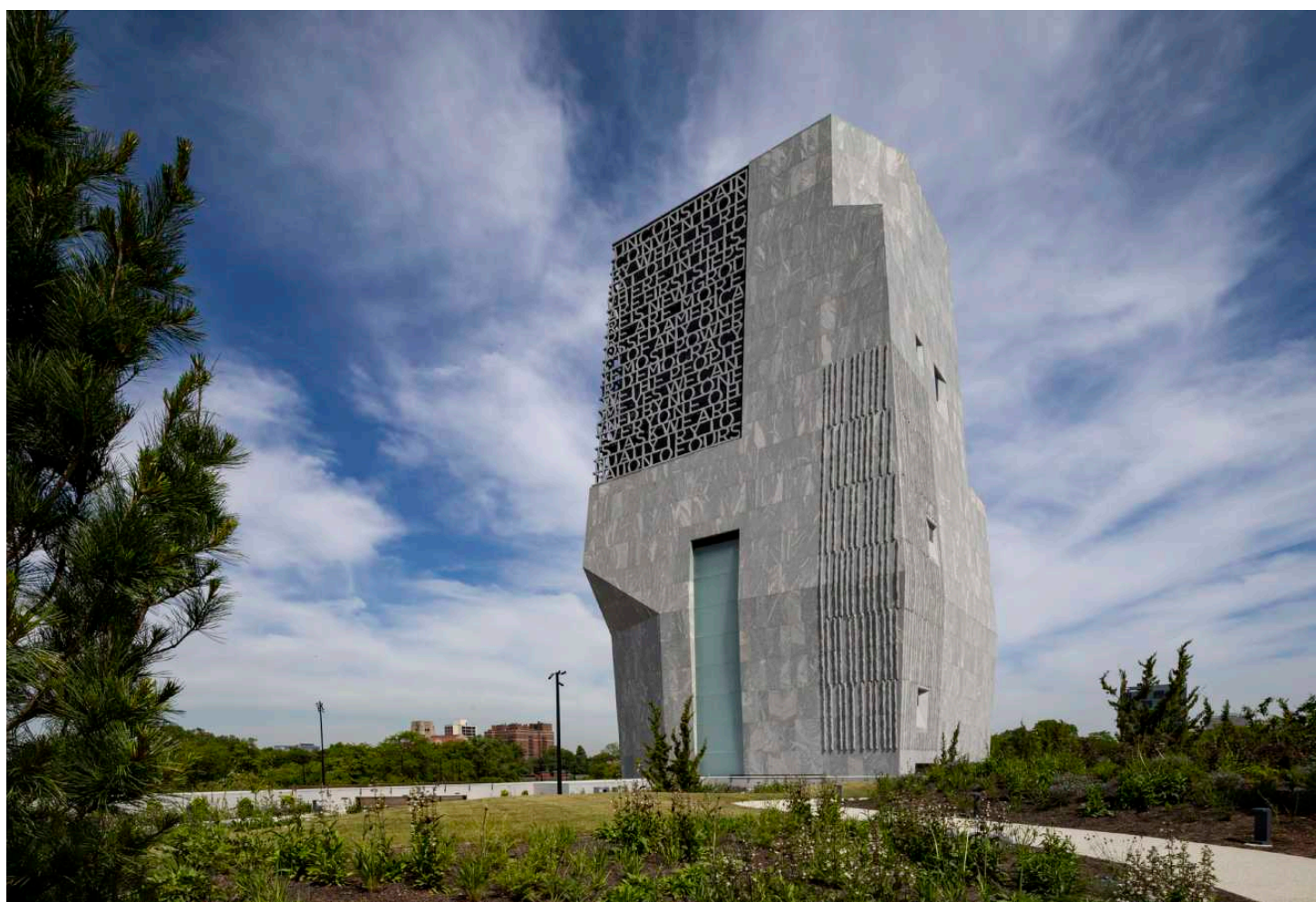
neighborhood on the city's Southwest Side. Each surgery involved a tummy tuck and at least one other procedure, typically liposuction.

Six of the women died from complications of plastic surgery, according to medical examiner and coroner records, and two other patients overdosed on pain medication at home. The Tribune could identify only one other doctor in Cook County who, since 2015, had more than one patient die after performing plastic surgery. He had

See **SURGEON** on Page A13



Dr. Ayoub Sayeg, a plastic surgeon, arrives at the Daley Center in Chicago for an Aug. 19, 2025, court hearing concerning a \$56 million verdict in the death of patient Idalia Corcoles. **EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**



## THE SHADOW ARCHITECT

The shape and form of the odd Obama Presidential Center came from the top. Outsiders may not understand its context



Edward Keegan

Forget Louis Sullivan's definition of the tall building as "a proud and soaring thing" — there's probably never been a building as tall as the Obama Presidential Center that seems so earthbound. The mostly solid 225-foot-tall tower's forms are unusual. And they seem to have been driven by their very atypical client.

"(President Barack Obama) was one

of the clients who walks in and says, 'Well, if I hadn't been a president, I would've been an architect,'" architect Billie Tsien recalls. "Anybody in practice, their stomach always slightly clinches, because you know, this person's going to try to be the architect."

But both Tsien and her partner, Tod Williams, describe a very involved Obama who really understood the drawings and models throughout the project's lengthy gestation period. "He made many good suggestions, and he made a few not so good suggestions," Tsien says.

For all the recent noise about the center's frankly unusual tower, there's

at least one thing that's downright conventional, even old-fashioned: It's a contemporary take on the traditional treasure box museum — a form popular throughout the 19th and 20th centuries that created mostly solid and protective structures that express their architectural seriousness through the decoration of mostly unwindowed facades. While not particularly tall, the older structures for the Art Institute, Field Museum, Adler Planetarium, Shedd Aquarium, and the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry are all of this distinct type.

Williams and Tsien's initial proposal

See **OBAMA** on Page A12

**Above:** The Obama Presidential Center on Wednesday in Chicago's Jackson Park. The tower's structure is principally concrete, although little is seen of the material throughout the building. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

## Legislators' childcare perks draw scrutiny

Ill. lawmakers lead US in spending campaign cash on minding kids

By Olivia Olander  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Five years after Illinois joined other states in allowing politicians to use campaign funds for childcare, a handful of state lawmakers from Chicago have become some of the nation's biggest users of laws designed to encourage parents — particularly mothers of young children — to run for office, according to a nonprofit organization tracking the funds.

But which lawmakers have made the most use of the measure, and to what degree they've tapped into their campaign funds, has sparked concerns about whether the legislation is working as intended.

The three biggest spenders in Illinois leveraging the childcare initiative are fathers of young children. One state senator has spent more than \$200,000 in campaign cash for his two children since 2021. Another state senator spent more than \$75,000 on a Montessori program in less than two years.

In one small but notable instance, a candidate who narrowly lost a 2023 race for the Chicago Police

See **FUNDS** on Page A8

INSIDE

### Bears' tactics leave frustration in wake

The team's tactics across years of negotiations — including ostensibly definitive statements about their intentions — drove several top Illinois leaders to open frustration. **Chicagoland, Page A3**

### Announcement a last cry for state to act

While the race for the Bears' landing spot isn't over, by virtue of Illinois failing to present the Bears something to evaluate, Indiana has vaulted into the lead. **Sports**

SUBSCRIPTION

Visit [myaccount.chicagotribune.com](http://myaccount.chicagotribune.com) or call 312-546-7900 to sign up for a subscription. To place an ad, visit [placeanad.chicagotribune.com](http://placeanad.chicagotribune.com).

WEATHER FORECAST

**TODAY** H: 81 L: 68  
**MON.** H: 82 L: 70  
**TUE.** H: 87 L: 72  
Complete details on Page A20

INDEX

Almanac ..... A17  
Crossword ... In Comics  
Editorials ..... B1  
Horoscope ... In Comics  
Letters ..... B3  
Obituaries ..... A18  
Rides ..... G7  
Success ..... G4  
Television ..... E6

178th year No. 158  
© Chicago Tribune



**abilities expo**

**June 12-14, 2026**

Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center

**Discover What's Possible**

Find disability products to boost your independence!

**FREE SHUTTLE**

Get **FREE** passes at [abilities.com](http://abilities.com)

Meet YouTubers Squirm & Grubs

# Cool ideas can help beat European heat



**Rick Steves**

When I travel to Europe these days, I frequently encounter heat waves. Thanks to the impact of climate change, Europe is getting hotter and hotter. In the Alps, once-mighty glaciers have receded, “summer skiing” is just a memory, and new ski lifts routinely come with snow-making equipment. Places that historically “never needed AC” — like Scandinavia, the Low Countries and Ireland — are retrofitting old hotels to stay cool. Heat records are shattered annually.

As formerly “extreme” weather becomes commonplace, and “storms of the century” trump each other year after year, Europe is doing its best to adapt — and it’s important for travelers to adapt, too. Here are some tips on beating the heat in Europe.

**First, plan your trip with weather in mind, both in terms of location and timing.** “Coolcations” — traveling to cooler climates during hot months — are trendy these days, but to me, that’s just timeless travel smarts. Save July and August for the Alps, Britain, Ireland and northern Europe. You’ll share outdoor patios with southern Europeans escaping soaring temperatures back home — and locals, eager to stretch out in the rare hometown sunshine.

But for hot destinations — like the Mediterranean countries — visit at cooler times. Italy and Spain can be balmy even in shoulder season months like May and October. But in March or November, it’s pleasantly mild. Check the climate charts and, if your timing is flexible, consider pushing to the edges of the hottest



Europe is getting hotter and hotter, which means visitors may need to find ways to stay cool while traveling. **DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI**

times. You’ll be met with cooler weather and fewer tourists.

**Be strategic about taking breaks for shade or air-conditioning.** You’ll also gain an appreciation for why very hot climates like Spain evolved a “siesta” approach of taking a break in the sizzling afternoon hours. Be a temporary local and consider joining them.

I long prided myself on not needing air-conditioning while traveling. But as things have heated up, I’ve been prioritizing it when choosing accommodations for summer travel. In general, however, Europe is less reliant on AC. Rather than cranking it up USA-style, Europeans use AC mostly for taking the edge off. You might notice that places like airports

and shopping malls aren’t refrigerated like back home — they’re just cool enough. So even if your hotel has AC, don’t expect it to be Texas-style, where’s-my-sweater robust.

To help reduce their carbon footprint, some cities prohibit AC outside of the hottest summer months. Usually, you won’t need it anyway — but if you encounter an out-of-season heat wave, adjust your expectations. When you check into your “air-conditioned” Venetian hotel on a 75-degree day in October, your receptionist may just shrug and say, “Open the window.”

These days, with America’s “drill, baby, drill” mentality undermining the global fight against climate change, it’s bad style for a Yankee to complain about

air-con. So if it’s still just too stuffy in your room, find ways to adapt. Many European cultures make the bed with a heavy duvet and no top sheet. If the front desk doesn’t have sheets to borrow, make one yourself by stripping the cover off the poofy duvet. You can also ask reception to borrow a fan — but these are first-come, first-served, so don’t wait until you’re sweltering late at night.

**When you leave the room to go sightseeing, draw the blinds.** It’s also customary to turn off the AC, to reduce energy consumption. (It may turn off automatically when you remove your key card from the power slot.) Meanwhile, time outdoor and exposed activities — such as exploring sunbaked ancient ruins

or walking around the top of the town wall — for the relative cool of morning or evening. Either way, bring sunglasses, a hat, sunscreen and a refillable bottle. Stay hydrated.

Above all, we travelers must reckon honestly with the role travel plays in contributing to the climate crisis. Transatlantic flights leave a serious carbon footprint. Do your best to travel in a way that minimizes your impact, like taking energy-efficient trains instead of gas-guzzling flights. And back home, look for ways to help.

For example, at Rick Steves’ Europe, we’ve innovated our Climate Smart Commitment — a self-imposed carbon tax, where we annually invest in a variety of projects that address the root causes of

climate change and improve the lives of some of our planet’s poorest people. We’d love travelers to join our commitment, if not make one of their own, to creatively mitigate the carbon you create by flying to Europe.

Europe is a joy at any time of year. If you happen to be traveling during a heat wave, you can still create wonderful memories — just do what you can to be climate smart, and find ways to adapt when you wish you could just say “no sweat.”

*Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.*

## CELEBRITY TRAVEL

### Producer indulges in cuisine on trips

By **Jae-Ha Kim**  
TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY

Grammy-winning producer and engineer Robert Margouleff has worked with music legends such as the Isley Brothers, Jeff Beck and Depeche Mode.

In his new memoir “Shaping Sounds: Stevie Wonder, Devo, the Synth Revolution, and My Life Behind the Music,” the author shares stories about working with these stars. It wasn’t his intent at the time, but his work helped create an eclectic musical time capsule.

“There were plenty of stories and when I recalled one, it led me to others that had not crossed my mind,” Margouleff, 85, said from his Los Angeles home. “Like mixing Robin Trower’s album for Crescendo Records back in the day. Trower was an in intro-spective man. (We were at) Malibu Beach on a week-day. We walked several miles with our feet wet in the surf end (section). We talked about our work in the studio and music.”

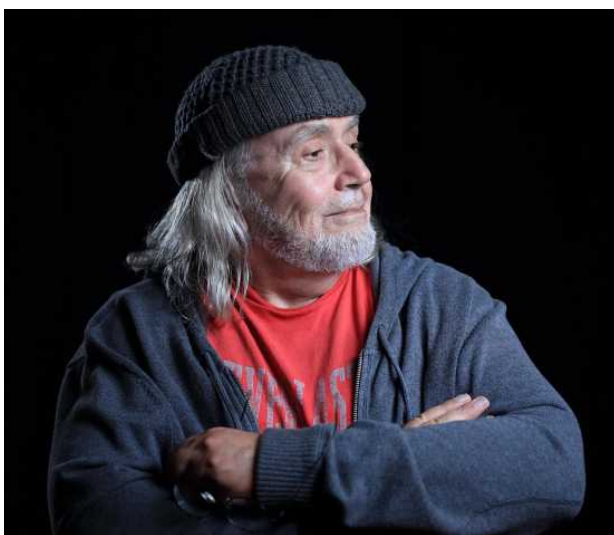
This interview with Margouleff has been edited for clarity and length.

**Q: Where did you write this book?**

**A:** I was housebound due to the COVID epidemic. Being isolated gave me the perfect excuse to face my life. And now I’ve become an author!

**Q: Do you have any upcoming trips planned?**

**A:** I will be traveling east from Los Angeles (to speak) at Williams College in Massachusetts in the Berkshires this fall. I am



Robert Margouleff became a combat photographer while stationed with the Army in Germany. **MARK SANDSTORM**

available for in-person appearances for sure. I love public speaking and do a lot of it. As a matter of fact, I just appeared at the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) with Mark Mothersbaugh of Devo.

**Q: What’s the most important thing you’ve learned from your travels?**

**A:** I learned how to become a combat photographer when I was in the U.S. Army in Germany in 1965. As I remember, I was stationed in Stuttgart VII Corps.

**Q: What is your favorite destination?**

**A:** The mountains of the Berkshires are (among) my favorites because I went to high school there. I also studied at the Tanglewood Summer Music Program, which is the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. I got to make music 24/7.

**Q: What was a trip you took as a child that stands out?**

**A:** I grew up in Great Neck, New York, (and) liked trips to Jones Beach (in New York) and Atlantic City (in New Jersey) in the summers with my family. We just went to Jones Beach off of Long Island, and then The Pines on Fire Island in my later days.

**Q: Where are your favorite weekend getaways?**

**A:** San Francisco, Las Vegas,

Palm Springs.

**Q: What are your five favorite cities?**

**A:** New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle and Tokyo.

**Q: Where would you like to go that you have never been to before?**

**A:** Italy and Spain.

**Q: When you go away, what are some of your must-have items?**

**A:** Clothes appropriate for where I am going, laptop, phone and a good camera.

**Q: What is your guilty pleasure when you’re on the road?**

**A:** The food. It’s very important to me because I love good quality cuisine native to where I am. At 85, I don’t have any more guilt left.

**Q: What is your best and worst vacation memory?**

**A:** The best were my trips to Paris, France, in the late 1960s. And London, also. I liked going to Tokyo because it was so different, so clean and organized ... and the funny signs in the hotel. In the hotel it said “Swimming Not.” The worst trip was getting constipated in Tokyo. and I couldn’t tell the pharmacist what was wrong. Nowadays there are translator apps.

For more from the reporter, visit [www.jaehakim.com](http://www.jaehakim.com).

## TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER

### Aer Lingus issues voucher but leaves one for spouse in limbo

By **Christopher Elliott** | KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

My husband and I had to cancel our Aer Lingus flights this past year because of a death in the family. The airline issued us vouchers. I received a voucher for \$938. My husband, Jorge, got an email saying that his \$925 voucher had been processed. But when I called the next month to book our next trip, an Aer Lingus agent told me that his voucher was never actually issued.

Here’s where it gets complicated. We live in Buffalo, New York, but wanted to fly from Toronto to Scotland because the fares are better. I asked Aer Lingus if we could have the vouchers reissued in Canadian dollars. They opened a case for both of us. I received my voucher within a reasonable time, but Jorge’s voucher never came.

I’ve been calling Aer Lingus for months. Each time, I get the same response: “A supervisor is working on it right now.” I’ve tried their WhatsApp line during office hours, but the virtual assistant just tells me to contact them during office hours — which I’m already doing. I’ve emailed. I’ve contacted the CEO. Every few months, I get an update email saying that they’re “reviewing the case.”

Six months after the cancellation, an agent told me to request a currency conversion and assured me that it would be expedited. They said to wait a few days for the voucher in Canadian dollars. I waited. Nothing. The next month, another agent said that we were “in the queue.”

A year later, I’d had enough. I sent another email saying that I’d accept the voucher in United States dollars. I just wanted my husband’s voucher. It’s now been over 15 months since Aer Lingus said that it processed Jorge’s voucher. This was supposed to help us travel after dealing with a death in our family. Instead, it’s been nothing but frustration. Can you help us get Jorge’s voucher? — *Beatrijs Albarraan, Buffalo, New York*

**A:** Aer Lingus should have issued your husband’s voucher immediately after you had to cancel your flights. According to Aer Lingus’ own policy, vouchers are issued in the same currency as the original booking. You didn’t need to exchange your vouchers for Canadian dollars to make a booking from a Canadian airport. But if you wanted a currency conversion, and Aer Lingus said that you could do it, it should have been handled as a straightforward request.

The airline’s behavior here is inexcusable. It issued your voucher but kept giving you the runaround on your husband’s voucher. Telling you repeatedly that “a supervisor is working on it” is a classic delay tactic.

You kept great records of every phone call, every WhatsApp attempt, and every email. This paper trail is exactly what consumer advocates need to help resolve cases like yours. You even escalated this to the CEO, which shows persistence.

The Department of Transportation has strict rules about refunds. While your case involved a voluntary cancellation and the issuance of a flight credit, the principle remains the same: Airlines must process these requests promptly.

I contacted Aer Lingus on your behalf. Within days, the airline finally took action. A manager issued your husband’s voucher in U.S. dollars as you requested. Initially, a customer service represen-

tative suggested that you buy a new ticket and submit a claim for reimbursement, which you correctly refused. Why should you pay out of pocket when the airline already owes you the money?

“We apologize to this customer for the delay in issuing their voucher,” an Aer Lingus spokesperson told me. “Aer Lingus is liaising directly with this customer to resolve the matter, and we hope to welcome them on an Aer Lingus flight soon.”

*Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Contact him at [elliott.org/help](http://elliott.org/help) or [chris@elliott.org](mailto:chris@elliott.org).*