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For Immediate Release

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State v. Toya Danielle Steward Press Release  
March 4, 2024

## **Charleston Woman Found Guilty of Burglarizing & Torching Ex-Boyfriend's Home**

After a five-day trial, a Charleston County Jury found Toya Steward, guilty of Arson Second Degree and Burglary Second Degree on March 1, 2024. Judge Deadra Jefferson sentenced Steward to 15 years suspended to 10 years on the Arson charge and 10 years suspended to 7 years followed by 5 years probation for Burglary. Managing Assistant Solicitor Nina Savas prosecuted the case along with Assistant Solicitor Catherine Fries. Steward was represented by attorneys Nick D'Angelo and Chief Public Defender Cameron Blazer of the Charleston County Public Defender's Office. Steward was found not guilty of Attempted Murder.

On February 8, 2020, Steward unexpectedly showed up to the victim's house at 2245 Wood Avenue in West Ashley around 9 o'clock in the morning. That same morning, the victim had severed the relationship with Steward because she was harassing his friends on social media. The victim was not home that morning, but Steward continued to bang on his door yelling profanities for nearly two hours. The victim's roommate was home, but refused to answer the door, unsure of Steward's intentions. Steward sent the victim a barrage of texts and phone calls.

Later that day, the roommate saw Steward's vehicle pull back into their driveway and Steward got out of the car in a fit of rage. She continued to send harassing, threatening messages to the victim telling him that she was going into his house to get her things back. The victim told her to leave multiple times and told her his son was in the house in attempt to get her to leave. The roommate hid in the bathroom when he heard Steward shatter the glass on the back door breaking into the house. She rummaged through the house stealing the victim's belongings. At one point, she took the 5-gallon gas can from the backyard and poured gasoline throughout the entire house. She then started the fire in three spots. The roommate was still in the bathroom when he suddenly heard an explosion. He touched the bathroom doorknob making sure it wasn't hot and opened the door to see the house in flames and engulfed in smoke. He ran across the hallway and jumped out of his bedroom window, barely making it out alive. Steward left a trail of clues making sure the victim knew she had been there. Steward continued to call and text the victim and left him angry voicemails. Those voicemails were played for the jury at trial.

Charleston County Sheriff's Office Detectives located Steward at her apartment where she admitted to going to Simmons' house earlier that day and again to see the house on fire. Her car was taken into evidence for processing and a SLED expert testified that gasoline was found on her driver's side floor mat. Prosecutors argued it was transferred by Steward when she stepped in the gasoline while she was setting the house on fire. Cell phone records showed Steward was at the house just prior to the start of the fire and she called the victim 127 times and texted him 141 times that day.

Asst. Solicitor Savas argued the actions of Steward that day were unjustifiable. The house fire put the lives of the firefighters, first responders, neighbors, and at risk. Steward's reckless behavior called for the prison sentence Judge Jefferson gave her.

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