

ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTORS OFFICE PRESS RELEASE



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Subject: Irvington Woman Convicted of Aggravated Arson for Torching Ex-Lover's West Orange Home
Date: February 07, 2014
Category: Arson
Defendant(s): Kelly Fowler

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn A. Murray announced today that an Essex County jury has convicted Kelly Fowler, 45, of Irvington of aggravated arson for setting her former girlfriend's West Orange home on fire.

Following a nine-day trial before the Honorable Sherry Hutchins-Henderson, Judge of the Superior Court, the jury found Fowler guilty on three counts. In addition to aggravated arson, she was also found guilty of burglary, and criminal mischief. She was acquitted of the more serious charge of attempted murder.

On Oct. 9, 2011, at approximately 4:40 a.m. a Maple Avenue home in West Orange was set on fire by the defendant who entered the porch of the home and set a basket filled with socks on fire and then fled the scene. Three people were in the home at the time but escaped without injury.

Shortly after the fire was set, the defendant was pulled over by a West Orange police officer on a routine patrol for making an illegal turn. As he was preparing to issue her a ticket, the officer received word via his police radio that there was a fire on Maple Avenue and all units should respond to that location.

The officer told the defendant it was her lucky day and let her go. During the course of the investigation the officer realized the name of the woman he had pulled over that day matched the name of a person who had an ongoing dispute with the victim. Fowler was subsequently arrested.

Fowler and the victim had recently broken up after a tumultuous on-again, off-again relationship. The victim was in a relationship with another woman, who was in the house at the time the fire occurred.

During the bail revocation hearing, Assistant Prosecutor Jason Hollingsworth, who tried the case, said, "We believe this defendant poses a serious threat to the community and we will be seeking an extended prison term given her prior convictions and the seriousness of this offense."

Fowler has four prior felony convictions. In 1996 she was convicted of aggravated manslaughter. She also has two prior convictions for drug offenses and one conviction for terroristic threats.

Following the jury's verdict, Judge Hutchins-Henderson ordered that she be taken into custody. She is currently being held at the Essex County Correctional Facility in Newark.

Sentencing is scheduled for March 28 before Judge Hutchins-Henderson. Fowler faces up to 30 years in prison because of her prior convictions.

[NOTE: The ECPO web site has additional material for this Press Release, such as photos or links to documents. To access this media material, please open the web site page for this Press Release at: <http://www.njecpo.org/?p=318>]

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