



For Immediate Release, June 6, 2016

Wichita, Kansas - On June 6, 2016, State v. Jason Stever, 10 CR 3344, was scheduled for preliminary hearing before Hon. Judge Joe Kisner. Mr. Stever appeared with counsel, Richard Ney, and entered a plea of no contest to an amended count of obstruction of official duty, a class A misdemeanor based on statements made by Mr. Stever to investigators in the days following the fire. The amended information alleged that:

“ . . . on or between the 28th day of December, 2005 A.D., and 1st day of January, 2006 one JASON PHILLIP STEVER did knowingly and intentionally, obstruct any person, to wit: Fire Investigator Joe Evans, [Wichita Fire Department] and Kansas Bureau of Investigation Agent, Rick Atteberry, authorized by law in the discharge of any official duty, to wit: investigation of the fire set at 2601 East Douglas, Wichita, Kansas on the 28th day of December, 2005.”

In 2010, Mr. Stever was charged with arson based on the accusation that he intentionally set fire to cardboard material left in the trash dumpster behind the building that housed both Twigs and a soon-to-be-opened hair/beauty salon. Investigators from the Wichita Fire Department determined the fire started in the dumpster and, as the heat from the fire rose, it breached a window located above the dumpster and entered the rear of the building. From that point, the fire spread north through the building causing the roof to fall. The building was a total loss. Investigators found no evidence of accelerant. Mr. Stever was alleged to have acted alone.

Mr. Stever denied intentionally setting the fire. Had the hearing proceeded, the State would have asked the court to determine that probable cause existed to believe Mr. Stever set the fire intentionally. Alternatively, the court could have found that the fire was started unintentionally as a result of a lit cigarette being discarded by Mr. Stever into the dumpster behind Twigs.

Upon the court's acceptance of his plea, Mr. Stever proceeded immediately to sentencing. He was placed on probation for 6 months and given a 30 day controlling sentence by agreement of the parties.

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