

United States Department of Justice

For Immediate Release

October 29, 2010 **United States Attorney's Office**
Southern District of California

Palmdale, California Resident Found Guilty of Threatening Two Federal Judges

United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy announced that yesterday a federal jury in Los Angeles, California returned verdicts of guilty against Terry Lee Steward on four counts of threatening to assault or murder two federal judges in the Central District of California, United States District Judge A. Howard Matz and United States Magistrate Judge Oswald Parada. The verdicts follow a two-day trial before United States District Judge Michael R. Hogan, a district judge from the District of Oregon who had been designated by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to preside over the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Huie, who is based in San Diego, was appointed to handle the prosecution as a Special Attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice based on the recusal of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California.

According to the evidence presented at trial, the defendant's threats related to two civil lawsuits he had filed in federal court. In the first lawsuit, filed in 2003, the defendant sued the United States for medical malpractice and related claims arising from surgery that the defendant had undergone at a Veterans Administration (VA) hospital. Judge Matz presided over a bench trial in April 2006, after which he awarded the defendant \$75,000.

The evidence further showed that the defendant then filed a second lawsuit against the United States in August 2006, claiming that his civil rights had been violated by the VA doctors, the attorneys, and the judge in the first lawsuit, and seeking additional damages. The second lawsuit was assigned to Judge Parada. After the defendant's initial complaint was dismissed with leave to amend, in October of 2006, the defendant filed an amended complaint and additional pleadings, requesting that Judge Parada reassign the case to Judge Matz to give Judge Matz a chance to atone and referring to the killing and death of Judge Parada and Judge Matz. The defendant was arrested in November 2006 on a criminal complaint and thereafter indicted on four counts of threatening a federal officer.

Judge Hogan set a sentencing hearing on February 3, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in the Central District of California.

Criminal Case No. 06CR-864-MRH

DEFENDANT

Terry Lee Steward

Palmdale, California

Age: 45

SUMMARY OF CONVICTION

Four Counts: Title 18, United States Code, Section 115 - Threatening a Federal Official
Maximum Penalties: Six years' imprisonment and/or a \$250,000 fine.

AGENCY

Federal Bureau of Investigation