

## Woman guilty in Spotsylvania bombing case

Keith Epps

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**A** woman who set off a homemade bomb in the Spotsylvania residence of her former neighbors was convicted of multiple charges Friday following an 11-hour trial.

Dina Elizabeth Guardado, 31, of Triangle was found guilty by Judge Joseph Ellis of 13 charges, including arson, five counts of attempted first-degree murder, five counts of attempted malicious wounding, possession of explosive materials and breaking and entering with a deadly weapon. Ellis will sentence Guardado on Jan. 16 in Spotsylvania Circuit Court.

According to the evidence, a member of the Arcand family discovered a fire in the basement of their home on Chancellor Road early March 29 of last year. Patrick Arcand was trying to put the fire out when a pressure cooker that did not belong to them exploded, expelling debris that struck Arcand. He was not seriously injured.

Investigators found another pressure cooker and crock pot that had been made into homemade bombs that did not explode. Guardado, who had had run-ins with several members of the Arcand family stemming back to when they were neighbors in Prince William County, was quickly identified as a suspect.

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Commonwealth's Attorney Travis Bird Friday put on what the judge described as "overwhelming" evidence linking Guardado to the crimes. A receipt for one of the pressure cookers found at the scene was found in her purse when she was arrested the next day in Prince William, and manuals for all three devices were found in her room during a subsequent search, along with four jars of black powder.

In addition, a computer was seized from Guardado's room on which about 150 searches related to making homemade bombs were found. Detective Kevin Rickens testified that the entries included "using a pressure cooker to make a bomb," "how to burn down a house" and "turning an alarm clock into a bomb."

Among the witnesses testifying against Guardado was her husband, Vasil Stoev. Stoev, a Bulgarian national, said he agreed to pay Guardado \$15,000 to marry him so he could stay in the United States.

Stoev said he married Guardado about a week before her arrest and had only paid her \$5,000 by then. He provided text messages to police that showed Guardado trying to get him to lie about her whereabouts on the morning of the fire. The couple never lived together.

Guardado insisted that she was not involved in the incident. She said she was in Fairfax when the incident took place, and she accused Al Arcand of setting her up in retaliation for a lawsuit she'd filed against him.

Under cross examination from Bird, Guardado said she didn't know how the bomb making materials got into her room and claimed she didn't send the text messages found on her phone nor messages sent from her Facebook page. She also denied being the woman in pictures retrieved from store surveillance cameras that witnesses identified as her.

"I did not do this Your Honor," she said. "This has been an injustice to me and my family."

Defense attorney Price Koch agreed that while the "trail of evidence seems to point to one person," no one was able to put Guardado in Spotsylvania that morning.

But Ellis, who called Guardado's testimony "incredible," said the evidence was clear. He said he couldn't recall a case where the evidence was so overwhelming and he said Guardado's attempt to kill was like something that a "terrorist" would do.

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