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### Local News

## **A Dallas influencer tried to hire friends to kill her ex-boyfriend and 2 others, feds say**

By ShaCamree Gowdy

Updated on: November 30, 2024 / 2:26 PM CST / CBS Texas

**DALLAS** – A Dallas influencer has been sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for attempting to hire a couple to carry out three murder-for-hire plots, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Tennessee.

In August 2022, Ashley Grayson, who ran an online business, invited a Memphis woman with whom she had previously collaborated to fly to Dallas to discuss a "business opportunity," a press release from the Justice Department stated. The Memphis woman and her husband flew in the following month and met with Grayson and her husband, Joshua Grayson.

During the meeting, Grayson offered to pay the couple to kill a woman from Southaven, Missouri, who ran a competing business and with whom Grayson had a falling out the previous year. Although they never met in person, Grayson suspected the woman of creating fake online profiles that criticized her and her company.

Grayson also asked the couple to kill her ex-boyfriend and a Texas woman who had recently made negative social media posts about her - each killing priced at \$20,000.

On Sept. 10, 2022, the Memphis woman recorded a phone call where Grayson confirmed she wanted the Southaven woman killed as "soon as possible." She offered an additional \$5,000 for the murder to be completed within the following week, U.S. Attorney's Office said.

Later, the Memphis couple sent Grayson a picture of police lights from an unrelated incident, pretending that they attempted to carry out the murder but were unsuccessful. They demanded \$10,000 – half of the initially promised fee – from Grayson for the alleged attempt.

The couple traveled to Dallas to meet with the Graysons and collect the \$10,000.

In July 2023, a grand jury indicted both Grayson and her husband for using interstate facilities to commit murder-for-hire. It occurs when someone uses any interstate commerce facility (like phones, emails, internet, or transportation across state lines) to plan, commit, or pay for a murder-for-hire.

After a week-long trial in March 2024, a jury found Grayson guilty but acquitted her husband.

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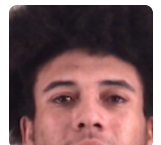
U.S. District Court Judge Thomas L. Parker sentenced Ashley Grayson to 120 months in prison on Oct. 31, the maximum allowable sentence, followed by three years of supervised release.

"This was a twenty-first century crime where online feuds and senseless rivalries bled into the real world," Reagan Fondren, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, said in a statement.

"The defendant tried to hire someone to murder a woman over things that happened exclusively on the internet. Fortunately, no one was physically hurt in this case, but the victim and her family still felt a severe and emotional impact as the result of the defendant's actions. The proactive response from the investigating agencies and our prosecutors prevented an even more serious crime from occurring."

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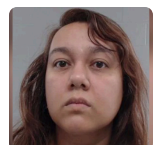
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