

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – An Atlantic County Grand Jury indicted two men Thursday for their alleged roles in the brutal April 25 killing of a Somers Point man whose body was discovered underneath The Pier at Caesars in Atlantic City, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

Jerry “Wolf” Soto, 36, whose last known address was the Atlantic City Rescue Mission, was indicted on charges of murder and two counts of possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose – a bottle or blunt object. Wayne Hoffman, 27, also of the Atlantic City Rescue Mission, was indicted on charges of aggravated assault and endangering an injured person.

As a result of an intensive almost two-week investigation involving several agencies, Prosecutor Housel obtained a warrant for the arrest of Soto and Hoffman for the killing of 19 year old Joseph Frankowski Jr. On Thursday afternoon First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik presented the case to a Grand Jury.

It is alleged that the victim, Soto and Hoffman, were drinking together on the beach before the fatal assault. Shortly after midnight on April 25, Soto and Hoffman assaulted Frankowski on the Atlantic City beach. Soto allegedly used a broken bottle to inflict the fatal wounds.

Frankowski, of Chapman Boulevard in Somers Point, was discovered in the early morning of April 25 by a passerby, who waved down an Atlantic City employee. The city employee contacted police.

An autopsy performed by Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park determined Frankowski suffered multiple traumatic injuries including blunt force trauma to the head and a fractured skull. The victim also suffered a brain contusion and multiple lacerations, including cutting injuries to the neck, face, torso and extremities, as well as rib fractures. The cause of death was a combination of the traumatic injuries.

Hoffman was arrested and taken to the Atlantic County Justice Facility prior to Soto and remain in jail in lieu of \$35,000 bail. Soto was taken into custody on May 8. He remains in the Atlantic County jail on \$1 million full cash bail.

Atlantic City Patrolman Joseph Aluise was the first on the scene. Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit Sgt. Michael Quigley and Atlantic City Detective Kevin Burrows were the lead investigators on the case.

*****These charges are merely an accusation and not proof of guilt. In all criminal cases, a charged defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.**

Anyone with information involving serious crimes is asked to call the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office at 609-909-7800 or go to the Prosecutor's Office Web site at <http://www.acpo.org/tips.html> and provide information by filling out the form anonymously on the Submit a Tip page. People can also call Crime Stoppers at 609-652-1234 or 1-800-658-8477 (TIPS). Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.