

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – A Pleasantville man was sentenced to 14 years in prison for numerous “smash and grab” type incidents at businesses throughout the county, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced Thursday.

In addition to the prison term, Superior Court Judge Bernard E. DeLury ordered on Wednesday that Maurice Forrest, 48, make \$28,557 in restitution, Assistant Prosecutor Janet Gravitz, who handled the State’s case, said.

The defendant entered guilty pleas in December 2008 to nine counts of burglary and one count of theft from a person for breaking into delis, dry cleaners and dollar stores in Somers Point, Absecon, Northfield, Hamilton Township, Egg Harbor Township, Galloway Township and Pleasantville. He also admitted that on Dec. 15, 2007, Forrest grabbed a young woman’s purse as she left an ATM machine on Wellington Avenue in Ventnor Heights. He stole \$600 from the victim. She was uninjured. The money was never recovered in any of the defendant’s crimes.

“The money left in the cash drawers was not enough for this defendant and he turned to violence when he grabbed a woman’s purse in Ventnor,” Gravitz said. “An extended period of time in which the defendant embarked on the crime spree could not be ignored.”

The judge sentenced Forrest to five years in prison for the theft from the person, five years to run consecutive for two burglaries and a four-year prison term to run consecutive for another burglary. Forrest also was sentenced to four years in prison to run concurrent.

On September 9, 2007, Forrest embarked on what would turn out to be a four-month-long crime spree that spread across seven municipalities and 23 businesses. It ended with his Jan. 14, 2008 arrest. In the majority of these burglaries, the defendant would hurl a brick through the window or glass door of the business. After gaining entry he removed the cash register causing further damage. The property damage exceeding the small amount of petty cash left in the register of the closed stores.

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.