

# ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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**Theodore F. L. Housel**  
Prosecutor

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## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release  
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2 Page(s)

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**MAYS LANDING** – A Maryland man entered a guilty plea today to one count of first-degree robbery and faces 16 years in prison at sentencing, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

Lawrence Bellamy, 31, of Baltimore, must serve 85 percent of the prison term before parole eligibility, according to Assistant Prosecutor Diane Ruberton. During the plea hearing the defendant admitted that on Jan. 4 he attacked Anthony Vastardis, 72, causing serious injuries. Vastardis, of Vineland, won \$10,000 in cash from the Trump Taj Mahal Casino & Resort. He put his winnings in his coat pocket and got in an elevator to go to the parking garage. Bellamy entered the elevator and when the two exited the defendant attacked Vastardis. Ruberton stated that casino surveillance cameras captured Bellamy follow the victim through the casino to the parking garage.

When the two exited the elevator the defendant punched Vastardis in the head. The victim fell and suffered a broken hip, cuts and bruises. A woman who was in the casino parking garage in her vehicle saw Vastardis on the ground and called 911. Bellamy fled the scene in a taxi. He was dropped off in Sicklerville, located in Camden County. Authorities searched for Bellamy. He was apprehended on March 17 when he returned to Atlantic City where authorities caught him stealing \$3,000 in casino chips from the Trump Plaza Casino and Hotel. Bellamy entered a guilty plea to one count of theft by unlawful taking in that case and will be sentenced to four years in prison. The Attorney General's Office Casino Prosecutions Unit is handling the theft case, Ruberton said.

Vastardis continues to recover from his injuries. His winnings were never recovered, Ruberton stated.

Superior Court Judge Bernard E. Delury Jr. presided over the plea hearing today. The defendant will be sentenced before Superior Court Judge Michael A. Donio on Oct. 16.

**\*\*\*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.