

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

4997 Unami Boulevard, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

Theodore F. L. Housel
Prosecutor

NEWS RELEASE

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For further information contact:
Madelaine Vitale 609-909 -7855
or 609-457-7359

MAYS LANDING – A jury convicted an Atlantic City woman today of murder for fatally shooting a Somers Point man. The defendant faces up to life in prison when sentenced in September, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

In addition to the conviction for the murder of Menya Charles Williams, Dara Woodall, 23, was found guilty of unlawful possession of a handgun and possession of a handgun for an unlawful purpose. The jury acquitted the defendant of conspiracy, according to Chief Assistant Prosecutor Dana B. Litke.

“I didn’t kill nobody. I didn’t kill nobody,” Woodall shouted when the guilty verdict was in. Sheriff’s officers removed the defendant from the courtroom.

Woodall’s cousin Carlos Woodall, 21, of Atlantic City, was acquitted on all counts which included conspiracy, possession of a handgun for an unlawful purpose, unlawful possession of a handgun and hindering apprehension by concealing evidence, according to Litke.

The victim’s family as well as the defendants’ family members sobbed aloud when the jury reached its verdict.

At 1:10 a.m. on Sept. 22, 2007, Atlantic City police responded to a 911 call for shots fired in the 500 Block of Tennessee Avenue in Atlantic City. When police arrived they found Williams shot multiple times with a handgun, Litke said.

Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park performed an autopsy on Williams and determined he suffered four gunshot wounds – one perforating wound to the right side of the head, one to the left side of his head and the others to his right shoulder and left lower leg.

Woodall was arrested and charged shortly after the crime. Carlos Woodall was arrested in November 2007. They were indicted in January 2008.

The trial began on July 20. The jury deliberated for approximately six hours before returning its verdict at 1:20 p.m. today. Superior Court Judge Michael A. Donio presided over the case and will sentence Dara Woodall at 8:45 a.m. on Sept. 24. The defendant must serve 85 percent of the prison term imposed.

During the trial several witnesses recanted their testimony. The State had to rely on prior statements given to Prosecutor's detectives, Litke stated.

"I applaud the jury for its ability to find the defendant guilty of murder. She is a dangerous and violent person, Litke stated. "Eyewitness testimony remains the most powerful evidence of a crime and we must encourage people to stand up to violence in the community."

Prosecutor Housel stated moments after the verdict was reached that this was yet another case in which urban homicides are tried with recanting witnesses.

"We will not back down in terms of prosecution of serious offenses even though witnesses recant," Prosecutor Housel stressed. "We reach out to the urban community to cooperate with us to help stop these senseless killings."

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.