

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – A 20-year-old man entered a not guilty plea today at his arraignment in connection with the January 2009 death of an Atlantic City teenager, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel stated.

Patrick Stanton allegedly caused the death of Julio Rodriguez by striking him in the head with a brick during an altercation on New Year's Eve. The victim died at the hospital nine days later. Stanton was arrested and charged with the crimes on Jan. 15.

Stanton was indicted in July on one count of aggravated manslaughter, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and unlawful possession of a weapon, Assistant Prosecutor Erik Bergman said.

During today's hearing before Superior Court Judge Michael A. Donio, Stanton waived the formal reading of the indictment and entered the not guilty plea, according to Bergman.

Atlantic City Police received a report of a man down at 11:45 p.m. the night of the incident. When police officers arrived they found Rodriguez unconscious in the Unit Block of South Harrisburg Avenue in Atlantic City. The brick alleged to have been used was recovered at the scene.

Rodriguez was transported to the AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center, City Campus. Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park performed an autopsy and determined the victim died of blunt force trauma to the head, Prosecutor Housel stated.

Stanton remains at the Atlantic County Justice Facility in lieu of \$200,000 cash or bond bail.

If convicted, Stanton could face 10 to 30 years in prison. He will be back in court for a status conference on Oct. 7.

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