

# 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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**MAYS LANDING** – A Maryland man was sentenced to 16 years in prison today for the vicious attack upon and robbery of an elderly Vineland man who had just won thousands of dollars at an Atlantic City casino, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel stated.

Lawrence Bellamy, 31, of Baltimore, must serve 85 percent of the prison term before parole eligibility. The defendant entered a guilty plea on July 29 to one count of first-degree robbery. During his plea hearing, Bellamy admitted that on Jan. 4, 2009 he seriously injured 72-year-old Anthony Vastardis. He further acknowledged that he stole \$10,000 the victim won at Trump Taj Mahal Casino & Resort. In addition to the prison term Superior Court Judge Michael A. Donio ordered that Bellamy pay \$10,000 in restitution, according to Assistant Prosecutor Diane Ruberton.

Vastardis put his winnings in his coat pocket and got into 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 following the victim through the casino to the parking garage, Ruberton said.

When the two men exited the elevator, Bellamy 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 in a taxi. He was dropped off in Sicklerville, located in Camden County. Authorities apprehended Bellamy on March 17.

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

**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.**