

# 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 Superior Court Judge sentenced a man to 40 years in prison for fatally shooting an Atlantic City man during a Father's Day celebration in the Stanley Holmes Village housing complex in 2006, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel stated today.

Aziz Gilliard, 24, of Atlantic City, must serve 85 percent of the 30-year prison term imposed for aggravated manslaughter in connection with the June 18, 2006, slaying of Kawan Hill, 26, of Atlantic City. The defendant was also sentenced to 10 years in prison, which will run consecutively, for possession of a weapon by a convicted person. He must serve five years of that term before parole eligibility, Assistant Prosecutor John Maher stated.

An Atlantic County jury convicted Gilliard of the killing on Oct. 1. During the two-week trial jurors heard testimony that two men started arguing at the party. Hill stepped in to calm the situation and the defendant, who was not one of the men in the altercation, shot Hill at point blank range in the head. Gilliard was charged with the killing in September 2006. He remained a fugitive until 2007 when authorities located him in Maryland.

Maher told the court when seeking the lengthiest prison term allowed by law for this defendant, that Gilliard has a continuous criminal history, including possession of illegal drugs, possession of weapons and violence dating back to when he was a juvenile. He said that the manner in how he killed Hill was particularly cruel.

"The callous nature of this crime...the sheer random brutality evidenced in this case is mind boggling," Maher said.

Evidence showed that Gilliard walked up to Hill without provocation and shot him from as close as 18 inches away. The victim had gunpowder burn marks on his head indicative of a gunshot at close range.

Superior Court Judge Michael A. Donio said that the killings in Atlantic County, especially in places such as the Stanley Holmes Village, and the intimidation of

witnesses to these killings have become all too prevalent. He said the courts would continue to impose penalties with the hope that individuals will someday understand that these crimes will not be tolerated.

Members of the victim's family were present at sentencing.

Hill's aunt Donzella Hill addressed the court. She said she could not understand how a person could take someone's life when he was attempting to keep the peace at a Father's Day party. "This person took my nephew," she said. "He has two young sons who will grow up without their father."

Gilliard also addressed the court. He told the victim's family that he was sorry for their loss but that he did not kill Hill.

**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.**