

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

4997 Unami Boulevard, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

Theodore F. L. Housel

Prosecutor

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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For further information contact:

Madelaine Vitale 609-909-7855

609-457-7359

MAYS LANDING – A man charged with killing his wife and dumping her body near a creek off of Spruce Avenue in Egg Harbor Township, appeared in court today to formally hear the charges against him, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel stated.

John M. Hilyard, 48, of 136 Bridle Path Drive in Egg Harbor Township, allegedly strangled his wife, Chun Hilyard, 45, of the same address, sometime early Tuesday morning during an altercation in their home. It is further alleged that the man removed his wife's body, drove to Fenton Mill's Creek and placed her body on the side of the creek. At 7:40 a.m. on Wednesday a jogger contacted police and reported the discovery. Later that same day, the suspect went to the police department to report his wife missing. An investigation of the discovery and the missing persons report led to Hilyard's arrest.

During the brief court hearing today, Superior Court Judge Albert Garofolo advised Hilyard of his rights and asked if the suspect wanted to hear the charges against him. The suspect said that he did not. When asked if Hilyard planned to hire an attorney to represent him, Hilyard said, "I believe so."

First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik spoke to reporters outside the courtroom shortly after the hearing. He said that Atlantic County law enforcement should be credited for the fine work they did in solving this crime. Hilyard was charged with the murder about 8 p.m. last night, approximately 12 hours after the victim's body was found.

Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park conducted an autopsy on Chun Hilyard Wednesday afternoon and determined the victim died of asphyxia due to ligature strangulation. Talasnik would not elaborate on the object used to strangle the victim.

The Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit with lead Detective Michael Mattioli and the Egg Harbor Township police conducted the investigation

Hilyard's bail remains at \$1 million full cash bail set last night. He is lodged in the Atlantic County Justice Facility pending further proceedings. The couple's three children are currently staying with family.

*****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) or visit the Crime Stoppers Website at <http://www.crimestoppersatlantic.com/>. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.