

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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Prosecutor

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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2 Page (s)

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MAYS LANDING – A teenager who entered a guilty plea in October to aggravated manslaughter and possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose for fatally shooting a Pleasantville man was sentenced to 20 years in prison today, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

In accordance with the plea agreement, Otis Ross, 19, must serve 85 percent of the prison term before being eligible for parole in connection with the Nov. 18, 2007 slaying of Armando Mayo Martinez, 24, of North Main Street. In addition, Ross must serve a 10-year concurrent prison term with a five-year-period of parole ineligibility for possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, according to Assistant Prosecutor Curt Baker, who represented the State.

The defendant admitted at his October plea hearing that he met Martinez at a restaurant in Pleasantville where the decedent asked about purchasing marijuana. The defendant had Martinez follow him to the defendant's Ridgewood Avenue neighborhood in Pleasantville where Ross pulled out a handgun and pointed it at the decedent's head. Ross said during his October plea hearing that he was going to rob the victim when the gun went off killing Martinez, Baker said.

Pleasantville police received a 911 call the morning of the incident and responded to 211A West Ridgewood Avenue for a report that a passerby discovered a body on the lawn. Police contacted the Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit and the Atlantic County Medical Examiner who arrived moments later. Dr. Hydow Park performed the autopsy and determined Martinez died from a single gunshot wound to the head.

Ross, who was 17 at the time of the crime, was arrested at his home the day after the shooting. He was transported to Harborfields Detention Center in Egg Harbor City where he remained until he voluntarily waived to Criminal Court during a Family Court hearing on Jan. 4, 2008. An Atlantic County Grand Jury indicted him two months later, Baker said.

Prior to imposing sentence, Judge Isman heard from the victim's sister, Sandy Mayo Martinez, who told the court through tears that she misses her brother very much. Other

family members present were the victim's other sister, his uncle and the mothers of his two children.

Ross also addressed the court. He apologized for his actions and stated that it was an accident.

"If he hadn't killed this decedent he would have killed another," Baker stated. "That is the type of individual Otis Ross is."

Judge Isman stated that young people are getting their hands on guns in certain communities in Atlantic County and often these armed robberies are ending in a homicide. The fact that the gun may have gone off accidentally does not change the fact that when you point a loaded firearm at someone's head the likely result is death. He also stated that the last three homicide trials he presided over were armed robbery cases that ended in someone's death.

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.