

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – An Atlantic City man was sentenced to 9 ½ years in prison for manslaughter today for an ongoing fight over an iPod that turned deadly on New Year's Eve of 2008, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel stated.

In accordance with a plea agreement, Patrick Stanton, 20, must serve 85 percent of the prison term before parole eligibility. Stanton struck Julio Rodriguez, 17, of Atlantic City, in the head with a brick during the Dec. 31, 2008, altercation. Rodriguez died at the hospital nine days later of blunt force trauma to the head and on Jan. 15, 2009, Stanton was charged with causing his friend's death. He was indicted in July of 2009. The defendant had previously accused Rodriguez of stealing his iPod from his South Kingston Avenue home several months prior to the deadly incident, according to Assistant Prosecutor Erik 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. The brick used in the assault was recovered at the scene.

During an emotional sentencing, Bergman emphasized that while Stanton who faced between eight to ten years as a result of his guilty plea, will be able to resume his life after prison, Julio Rodriguez will not have that opportunity.

"It was a senseless death resulting in numerous lives being changed forever," Bergman stated.

Prior to the sentencing, the victim's mother tearfully spoke of her loss. She told the court that sometimes when she sees somebody who reminds her of her son she feels deep pain, Bergman stated.

Superior Court Judge Michael A. Donio stated that the fight between Stanton and Rodriguez was unnecessary and led to the tragic death of a young person.

Stanton expressed great remorse and sorrow to the victim's family and said that if he could give his life for the victim's life, he would, Bergman said.

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.