

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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Prosecutor

NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – An Atlantic County jury convicted an Atlantic City man of murder, felony murder, and second-degree burglary, for strangling his ex-girlfriend to death in her Somers Point residence in 2008. The defendant faces life in prison, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

On May 20, 2008, Najee Kelsey, 24, of Sewell Avenue, of Atlantic City, went to the Carriage House apartment complex in Somers Point and forcibly entered Tanisha Tull's home, assaulted her and killed her. At 4:45 p.m. the day of the crime, Somers Point police received a call from apartment complex management to check the well being of a tenant. When police arrived, they found Tull, 19, a nursing student at a local college, dead in her bedroom and contacted detectives with the Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit who arrived shortly thereafter. Kelsey was arrested and charged with the crimes two days later, according to Chief Assistant Prosecutor Chet Wiech.

During the trial, which began on April 12, the defense told the jury that the victim was strangled not murdered after a breakup just days before. Wiech told the jury that it was a knowing killing committed during the course of a burglary, which made it both murder and felony murder, which is murder during the commission of another crime.

The jury deliberated for two hours over two days, before rendering the guilty verdict this afternoon. When the jury foreman read the verdict: "Guilty. Guilty. Guilty." some of the victim's family members wiped tears.

The maximum punishment for either murder, or felony murder, is 30 years to life of which the defendant must serve 85 percent of the prison term before parole eligibility. However, the counts may merge, Wiech said.

"The jury's verdict was well-supported by the evidence in the case," Wiech said.

Superior Court Judge James Isman revoked Kelsey's bail shortly after the verdict. The defendant will be sentenced on June 3 at 1:30 p.m.

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.