

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – Two Camden County women were sentenced to decades in prison today for the brutal October 2009 beating death of a Camden County man whose body was discovered in a wooded area off of Route 50, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

Ashley McLaughlin, 23, of Sicklerville in Camden County, and Cynthia Myers, 27, of Tulip Avenue in Camden, New Jersey, set out to rob their acquaintance John Quann Jr., 23, of West Atco. On Oct. 9 McLaughlin called Quann and told him to pick the two women up. He picked them up and at one point he pulled to the side of Cross-Keys Road in Camden County. That was when, pursuant to their plan, Myers left the vehicle at which point McLaughlin struck Quann in the back of the head with a hammer. Myers then returned to the car, wrapped her scarf around his neck and began to strangle him until he passed out. The women then drove Quann eastbound on the Atlantic City Expressway before exiting in Hamilton Township just past the tollbooth. Driving to a wooded area, McLaughlin led Quann deeper into the woods where she continued to assault him in an effort to complete the robbery. When Quann resisted, McLaughlin summoned Myers and the two of them forced Quann to the ground, tied his hands behind his back and hit him with a hammer until he was dead, according to First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik.

A hunter discovered Quann's body on Oct. 14 and called police. Hamilton Township Police and the Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit responded. McLaughlin and Myers were arrested the following day. Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park performed an autopsy and determined Quann died of multiple blunt force trauma to the head. In all, the defendants delivered more than 20 blows to Quann's head with the hammer and in addition used the claw end of the murder weapon to strike the victim in the face.

During an emotional sentencing today, some of the victim's family members wept as Talasnik emphasized the depravity of the defendants, who killed the victim in such a heinous way, for the sake of rent money.

“These women were both willing to kill for money and both were equally willing to kill to silence a witness,” Talasnik stated to the court, adding that the women attempted to clean the victim’s vehicle and sell it for \$1,500.

Talasnik characterized the defendants as having a “moral deafness,” because there is supposed to be something inside all of us that tells us killing is wrong.

”The only rational thing to do is to lock them up,” Talasnik stated of McLaughlin and Myers.

Several of the victim’s family including the victim’s father, mother and sister, also addressed the court.

John Quann Sr. told Superior Court Judge Bernard E. DeLury that he is traumatized by what happened to his son and that he hopes the defendants realize what they have done.

“I don’t understand why this happened to the Quann family because John Quann would do no harm to nobody. I miss him,” the victim’s father told the court. “It’s just heartbreaking that John died like he died.”

Annabelle Ferreria, the victim’s mother, also addressed the court. “I loved my son very much. I still do and they (the defendants) will have to sit and think of what they did to my son. May God have mercy on their souls.”

Prior to the Judge imposing the sentences, which were done separately, McLaughlin turned toward the family and stated that she was sorry for her actions.

“I can’t take back what I did but I’m sorry,” McLaughlin said.

Myers attempted to withdraw her plea. She did not apologize to the family and stated that she took part in the assault, but did not kill Quann and that she wanted to go to trial. However, the Judge denied her request, citing several legal reasons, including the defendant’s admitted complicity in the crimes at her Jan. 27 plea hearing and the overwhelming evidence against her.

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.