

# ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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**Prosecutor**

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## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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MAYS LANDING— A Superior Court Judge sentenced a Ventnor man to life in prison today for the June 3, 2008 bludgeoning death of his acquaintance who was found dead in his Egg Harbor Township condominium two weeks later, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

Mark Little, 45, of 800 Burk Court, killed Howard Lawson, 63, a retired postal worker. Little must serve a minimum of 63 years and four months in prison without the possibility of parole, according to First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik. On April 7, 2010, after a three-week-trial, a jury convicted Lawson of murder, unlawful possession of a weapon and theft by unlawful taking for stealing the victim's luxury car. The jury acquitted the defendant of felony murder, which is the murder during the commission of another crime, robbery, and theft of Lawson's credit card, according to First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik.

At 5:52 p.m. on June 17, 2008, Egg Harbor Township police responded to the victim's 82 Catherine Court home for a wellness check. Upon arrival, Egg Harbor Township Sgt. Robert Gray discovered Lawson's decomposing body in his third-floor bedroom. The Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit responded and conducted the investigation along with Egg Harbor Township police. Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park performed an autopsy on Lawson and determined the victim died of blunt force trauma to the head. The murder weapon was never recovered.

On June 20, 2008, Little was arrested and charged with theft of the victim's car and credit card. Further investigation resulted in Little being charged with homicide in October of 2008 and he was indicted in December of 2008.

The murder weapon believed to have been used was a blunt object. It was never recovered, Talasnik stated.

Prior to Superior Court Judge Albert Garofolo imposing sentence, Lawson's sister-in-law Patti Lawson addressed the court. She described Lawson as loving, caring and sweet, someone who never became jaded. Howard Lawson saw the good in people and was a "generous soul."

"It's funny because the people who really loved and cared for Howard never took advantage of him," Patti Lawson told the court.

Little also addressed the court. He maintained his innocence and described himself as a "scapegoat," Talasnik 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.**