

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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2 Page (s)

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MAYS LANDING— A woman, her teenaged son and her brother, were fatally shot by the father of her 3-year-old son in the Woodlands condominium complex in Hamilton Township last night before taking his own life, First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik said today.

Hamilton Township Police responded to 2715 Evergreen Court at 7:36 p.m. for a 911 call for shots fired. Upon arrival, police attempted to open the front door but the body of Ronald Coleman, 39, of Chestnut Avenue in Vineland, was blocking it. As a result, police made entry through an unlocked patio door. The victim appeared to have suffered a number of gunshot wounds. Authorities then went to the master bedroom where they found Tracy Coleman, 44, of the Evergreen Court address, dead. Her son Reginald Coleman-Butler, 15, of the same address, was found dead in his bedroom of a gunshot wound to the head. He was on the floor in a fetal position. Tracy Coleman's 3-year-old child was found lying unharmed on his mother's bed. At least a dozen spent shell-casings were found at the scene, Talasnik stated.

The Hamilton Township Police Department requested the assistance of the Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit who responded moments later. Upon arrival, Prosecutor's Office detectives were advised that at 6:50 p.m., the night of Tracy Coleman's slaying, she had filed a domestic violence complaint against her live-in boyfriend Sharif Whitlock, 36, the father of the toddler, according to Talasnik.

Neighbors at the condominium complex told police that they saw Whitlock leave the scene in his vehicle; a Dodge Charger, shortly after hearing a loud argument in the condominium followed by several gunshots. Police located that vehicle at 3:15 a.m. in Winslow Township today but were unable to find the suspect until daybreak. At 5:30 a.m. authorities located Whitlock near his abandoned car. He was hanging from a metal tower supporting high voltage electrical lines located off of Cedar Brook Road in Winslow Township. His identification as well as the clothing worn the night of the slayings matched his description, Talasnik said.

Autopsies on the three victims found at the Woodlands crime scene to determine the exact cause of death are being performed by Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park. An autopsy on the apparent killer, Sharif Whitlock, was performed by

Medical Examiner Edward Chmara determined that the cause of death was hanging and the manner of death to be suicide.

The investigation was conducted by the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, the Hamilton Township Police Department, the Winslow Township Police Department and the Atlantic County Office of Emergency Management.

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.