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TWO MEN CHARGED WITH DRUG DELIVERY RESULTING IN DEATH IN JULY 1st FATAL OVERDOSE IN KOP

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Oct. 15, 2019) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, Upper Merion Township Police Chief Thomas Nolan and Norristown Police Chief Mark E. Talbot announce the arrest of Tracy C. Crabbe Jr., 39, of Norristown, and John P. Manetta, 38, of Clearwater, Fla., on the criminal homicide charge of Drug Delivery Resulting in Death in the July 1, 2019 death of Sherri Bilella, who died of overdose at a motel in Upper Merion Township.

At 8:57 p.m., July 1, 2019, Upper Merion Police responded to the Motel 6 located at 815 W. Dekalb Pike for a call of an unresponsive 53-year-old female in Room 210. Police officers and emergency medical personnel were let into the room by Manetta. Despite attempts at lifesaving measures, the victim, Sherri Bilella, was pronounced dead at Suburban Community Hospital. Responding officers found multiple syringe needles in the hotel room, including two empty syringe needles in close proximity to Bilella's body, as well as two empty blue wax bags stamped in black letters "GUCCI."

Dr. Erica Williams of the Montgomery County Coroner's Office conducted an autopsy on July 2, 2019, of Bilella's body. Dr. Williams opined that Bilella died from the lethal dose of fentanyl and xylazine found in her system. Xylazine is a veterinary sedative used on large animals such as cattle and horses. It has emerged recently as a deadly cutting agent used by heroin and fentanyl dealers.

Following Bilella's overdose death, Manetta told detectives that he had purchased the heroin used by Bilella from someone named "Tank" in Philadelphia. However, cell phone and Lyft ride-sharing service records showed that he had actually traveled to Norristown to make the purchase. Norristown Detectives knew of someone who went by that nickname, which led them to Crabbe. Detectives then arranged for and executed three undercover controlled buys of bundles of heroin from Crabbe on July 2, July 5, and July 8 in Norristown. Following the executed buy on July 8, police moved in to arrest Crabbe, and he fled into a residence without permission of the homeowner and hid. He was taken into custody and charged with Possession with Intent to Deliver and related offenses.

Testing by National Medical Services on the baggies, all stamped "GUCCI," found in the hotel room near the body and those purchased by detectives in the three undercover buys were each found to contain different drugs. Of the baggies found in the hotel room by the body, one contained xylazine and fentanyl, and another baggie contained methamphetamine. The 14-baggie bundle purchased on July 2, 2019, was found to contain cocaine, fentanyl, heroin and 4-ANPP, a precursor and a metabolite of several fentanyl analogs. The 26 baggies in two bundles purchased on July 5, 2019, were found to contain fentanyl, valeryl fentanyl and 4-ANPP. The 26 baggies in two bundles purchased on July 8, 2019, were found to contain fentanyl, valeryl fentanyl and 4-ANPP.

"It is important to note that baggies being sold as heroin by the same dealer, each stamped "GUCCI," contained completely different mixtures of drugs that included heroin, fentanyl, valeryl fentanyl, xylazine, methamphetamine and cocaine. This adulteration of illicit drugs should be of great concern for drug users," said Steele. "Those suffering from addiction need to be aware that even though dealers try to 'brand' their heroin, there is still no guarantee of what's in that baggie, from bundle to bundle or baggie to baggie, even if it's stamped with the same name or marking. There are no content labeling guidelines or warning labels for blue wax baggies. Drug dealers can—and do—call the drugs they are selling whatever they want to make the sale. One baggie could contain heroin alone, while the next, still stamped with the same 'brand name' like GUICCI could contain heroin, fentanyl, xylazine, methamphetamine, cocaine or other deadly mixtures."

Crabbe was arrested on July 8, 2019, and charged with Possession with Intent to Deliver and has been in the Montgomery County Correctional Facility since. He was arraigned on the new charge of Drug Delivery Resulting in Death and related charges on Oct. 10, 2019 before Magisterial District Judge William Maruszczak, who set bail at \$500,000 cash. The defendant was unable to post bail and remained in MCCF.

Manetta was arrested on Oct. 10, 2019, and charged with Drug Delivery Resulting in Death and related charges. He was arraigned before Judge Maruszczak, who set bail at \$50,000, ten percent. The defendant was unable to post bail and was remanded to MCCF.

A preliminary hearing for both defendants is set for 10 a.m., Oct. 24, 2019, before Judge Maruszczak.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Samantha Thompson, captain of the Narcotics Unit.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele

CRIMINAL CHARGES, AND ANY DISCUSSION THEREOF, ARE MERELY ALLEGATIONS AND ALL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.