



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

KEVIN R. STEELE

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

EDWARD F. McCANN, JR.

FIRST ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY

COURTHOUSE

P.O. BOX 311

NORRISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

19404-0311

SAMUEL J. GALLEN

CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE

JESSE S. KING

CHIEF OF STAFF

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S FAX

COUNTY DETECTIVE BUREAU

(610) 278-3090

(610) 278-3095

(610) 278-3368

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kate Delano 610-278-3148

MASON HALL, 19, ARRESTED FOR 2017 NORRISTOWN FARM PARK SEXUAL ASSAULT



MASON HALL

NORRISTOWN (Oct. 21, 2019) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, West Norriton Township Police Chief A. Dale Mabry and Norristown Police Chief Mark E. Talbot announce the arrest of Mason Alexander Hall, 19, of Palmer Drive in West Norriton, on charges of felony Involuntary Deviate Sexual Assault and multiple related charges stemming from the gunpoint sexual assault that occurred in Norristown Farm Park on the morning of Aug. 1, 2017.

The sexual assault occurred between 10:30 and 10:50 a.m., on Stony Creek Road in Norristown Farm Park. The man attacked the 19-year-old victim, held a black semi-automatic weapon to her head and forced her into a secluded pasture off of the walking path, where he sexually assaulted her. At the time of the attack, the perpetrator was wearing a dark-colored hooded sweatshirt, despite the 86-degree heat, and attacked the victim from behind so there was

limited descriptive information for police to go on. However, DNA was recovered.

“Since we had our attacker’s DNA, we always knew who he was, but it took 27 months of high-tech scientific efforts and thousands of hours of old-fashioned police work to track down this violent criminal and make this arrest,” said Steele. “Rapes and sexual assaults where a gunman attacks an unknown victim are, thankfully, rare in Montgomery County, and we used every avenue available to solve this violent crime.”

On Oct. 18, 2019, Hall was arrested at his home in Norristown, which is 1.4 miles from the site of the assault, after DNA results showed he was the perpetrator of the gunpoint sexual assault.

Hall’s arrest comes 27 months after the attack. In that time, a joint investigation by West Norriton Police and Montgomery County Detectives left no stone unturned. Immediately following the attack, officers canvassed the park, brought in a tracking dog, scoured surveillance video from the park’s surrounding area and submitted the recovered DNA to law enforcement databases of individuals arrested for sexual offenses as well as other crimes. The District Attorney’s Office offered a \$10,000 reward and, that fall, submitted the perpetrator’s DNA to Parabon NanoLabs for phenotyping analysis. Parabon then produced a composite illustration—like a high-tech police artist’s sketch—of what the perpetrator could look like, based on his DNA profile, which was found to be 52 percent European and 45 percent African. The reward and illustration generated multiple tips but none led to the perpetrator.

Following the generation of the DNA profile, detectives then began looking at familial DNA, or partial matches to the perpetrator’s DNA along a specific number of critical markers. As a result, detectives identified distant relatives of the attacker, and a number of these relatives were interviewed. Eventually over the course of 22 months, with final assistance by the FBI, investigators developed two local suspects, one of whom was ruled out based on the description from the victim.

Detectives recently learned that the suspect had been involved in an incident in September 2017 where the Norristown Police recovered a bloody hammer, which had been preserved as evidence. On Sept. 27, 2019, Montgomery County Detectives retrieved the bloody hammer from the Norristown Police evidence room and submitted it to the Philadelphia Police Office of Forensic Science, which determined the DNA matched the perpetrator.

“This arrest represents thousands of hours of focused police work by the two detectives overseeing this case as well as our support staff. These detectives never gave up,” said Steele. “They also had some significant help along the way from other law enforcement. I especially want to thank the FBI as well as the Philadelphia Police Office of Forensic Science.”

Hall is charged with Involuntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse, Sexual Assault, Terroristic Threats, Unlawful Restraint, Simple Assault, Recklessly Endangering Another Person, Possession of an Instrument of Crime, and Possession of a Firearm by a Minor, since the defendant was 17 at the time of the gunpoint sexual assault. He was arraigned on Oct. 18, 2019, before Magisterial District Judge Kathleen Rebar, who set bail at \$1 million cash. The defendant was unable to post bail, and he was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m., Oct. 25, 2019 before Magisterial District Judge Marc Alfarano.

The case will be prosecuted by District Attorney Steele and Assistant Chief of the Trials Division Brianna Ringwood, who oversees the Family Protection Unit, which includes sex crimes.

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.