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RONALD BRAUNING OF ABINGTON CHARGED WITH DRUG DELIVERY RESULTING IN DEATH IN AUGUST FATAL OVERDOSE



NORRISTOWN, Pa. (March 20, 2018) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, Hatfield Township Police Chief William J. Tierney, Lower Merion Township Police Superintendent Michael J. McGrath and Montgomery Township Police Chief J. Scott Bendig announce the arrest of Ronald Brauning, 40, of Abington, on the criminal homicide charge of Drug Delivery Resulting in Death in the overdose death of Ronald Solomon of Hatfield Aug. 14, 2017.

At 2:25 a.m., Aug. 14, 2017, Hatfield Township Police responded to a residence on Koffel Road to find an unresponsive male lying on the garage floor. Despite naloxone administration and life-saving measures, Solomon was pronounced dead at Abington Lansdale Hospital. The ensuing investigation by the Montgomery County Detective Bureau's Opioid Task Force Detectives revealed that at approximately 9:20 p.m., Aug. 13, the victim met with Brauning at a friend's house, where Brauning sold him illegal drugs including fentanyl and methamphetamine. After

purchasing these drugs, the victim returned home where he ingested the drugs and died. A bag of drugs was found hidden beneath Mr. Solomon's cell phone case. Testing by National Medical Services found that the bag contained methamphetamine.

Forty-five minutes following the victim's overdose death, Brauning was arrested by Montgomery Township Police in an unrelated incident for Possession with Intent to Deliver and other drug-related charges. At the time of his arrest, Brauning was in possession of six zipper-sealed bags, which testing determined was methamphetamine, and four blue wax paper baggies, three of which contained heroin and the fourth contained a heroin-fentanyl mix. Brauning has been in the Montgomery County Correctional Facility since this arrest.

An autopsy by the Montgomery County Coroner's Office determined that Mr. Solomon died from a combined drug intoxication of methamphetamine and fentanyl. Dr. Khalil Wardak confirmed that the amount of fentanyl in the decedent's blood alone would have killed him.

Brauning is charged with Drug Delivery Resulting in Death, a felony criminal homicide charge that could result in a sentence of up to 40 years—a penalty similar to third-degree murder—as well as Involuntary Manslaughter, Possession with Intent to Deliver, Possession of a Controlled Substance and Criminal Use of a Communications Facility.

“Ronald Solomon died in his garage from being poisoned by drugs—fentanyl and methamphetamine—sold to him by a dealer. This dealer knew how deadly these drugs were and sold it to the victim anyway, just to make money,” said Steele. “Dealers peddling their poison should think twice about doing so in Montgomery County. If someone dies and we can prove who provided the drugs to them, the dealer is on the hook for homicide and looking at a sentence of 20 to 40 years in prison.

“This is our first arrest for this charge in 2018, and mark my words, more arrests will be coming. As long as drug dealers continue to peddle their deadly poison in Montgomery County, our law enforcement personnel will seek to hold them accountable for these deaths,” said Steele.

Brauning was arraigned before Magisterial District Judge Edward Levine, who set bail at \$750,000. The defendant was unable to post bail and remained in MCCF. A preliminary hearing is set for 9:30 a.m., March 30, 2018, before Judge Levine.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant Chief of Trials Tonya Lupinacci and Assistant District Attorney Robert Kolansky.

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.