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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **THREE ARRESTED FOR DRUG DELIVERY RESULTING IN DEATH IN WOMAN'S OVERDOSE DEATH IN UPPER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP**



**JONATHAN HEFFREN**



**MICHAEL LAVELLE**



**MARRISSA ROMAN**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Sept. 12, 2022) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, Upper Providence Township Police Chief Mark Freeman and Pottstown Police Chief Mick Markovich announce the arrests of Jonathan Heffren, 27, of Reading; Michael Lavelle, 23, of Plymouth Meeting; and MARRISSA ROMAN, 29, of Douglassville, for Drug Delivery Resulting in Death, Possession With Intent to Deliver and related charges stemming from the May 2022 overdose death of 41-year-old Jessica Martin at a home in Upper Providence Township.

On Monday, May 16, 2022, at approximately 8:26 p.m., Upper Providence Township Police were dispatched to a residence on Providence Forge Road for a reported cardiac arrest. Police arrived and were able to resuscitate her. She was transported by ambulance to Phoenixville Hospital, where she died three days later. An autopsy by the Chester County Coroner's Office determined that Martin died of complications of fentanyl and xylazine intoxication. At the overdose scene, police found nine blue wax baggies stamped "ADIDAS" and containing a purple substance suspected of being heroin/fentanyl as well as a needle and other evidence of drug use.

Upper Providence Township Police, Pottstown Police and Montgomery County Detectives launched a joint investigation into Martin's overdose death. In the victim's

cellphone, detectives found text messages from the morning she overdoses, where Martin arranged to purchase \$80 worth of baggies stamped "ADIDAS" from Heffren. Martin said she would pick up on the "ADIDAS" baggies from Heffren in Room 228 at the America's Best Hotel on High Street in Pottstown. Pottstown Police reviewed surveillance footage from the hotel and observed Martin arrive and depart from Room 228 at the time stated in the text messages. The investigation also found that Heffren obtained the purple-dyed heroin/fentanyl stamped "ADIDAS" from his suppliers Lavelle and Roman, both of whom were the registered occupants of America's Best Hotel Room 228. On May 20, 2022, a search warrant was served on America's Best Hotel Room 228, and 424 bags of suspected fentanyl stamped "ADIDAS" were seized. All three defendants were present in the room and were arrested by law enforcement on Possession with Intent to Deliver (PWID) charges.

Laboratory testing on the "ADIDAS" baggies located at the scene of Martin's overdose found that they contained fentanyl, fentanyl derivatives and xylazine, a non-opioid tranquilizer used by veterinarians to sedate horses, cattle and other large animals. Chemical testing on the 424 "ADIDAS" baggies seized in the hotel room found that they contained a similar drug mixture as the bags found at the death scene.

"These defendants sold a very potent and deadly mix of fentanyl and xylazine to Ms. Martin, causing her death. Drug users should know that xylazine is even more potent than fentanyl," said DA Steele. "With this arrest, a significant supply of illegal drugs in Montgomery County has been stopped. Law enforcement is continuing to hold drug dealers accountable for selling the deadly drugs that kill our residents."

The new charges of Drug Delivery Resulting in Death, PWID, Criminal Use of a Communications Facility and related were filed against the defendants, and they were arraigned before Magisterial District Judge Andrea Duffy on Sept. 9, 2022. Judge Duffy set bail at \$250,000 cash for each defendant. As part of the Montgomery County PreTrial Services Program, a bail review hearing was held before Court of Common Pleas Judge Henry S. Hilles III, who reduced bail for Roman and Lavelle to a total of \$99,000 cash each. Heffren's bail was unchanged. All three defendants remain in Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is set for 9:30 a.m., Sept. 23, 2022, before Magisterial District Judge Richard H. Walsh.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Lindsey Mills, Captain of the Narcotics Unit, and Assistant District Attorney Robert Waeltz.

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.*