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INVESTIGATION OF MARCH 4 OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING IN ABINGTON CONCLUDES; OFFICER CLEARED IN USE OF FORCE

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (March 22, 2018)—Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele announced today that the investigation of an Abington Township Police Officer's fatal shooting of an armed suspect inside a residence in the 800 block of Jenkintown Road in Abington was a lawful use of force.

The investigation of the shooting was conducted by the Montgomery County Detective Bureau, as is normal procedure for officer-involved shootings in Montgomery County. The Abington Township Police Department, the officer involved and the officers on scene cooperated with the investigation.

The investigation revealed that Abington police were dispatched at 2:18 p.m. Sunday, March 4 to a reported domestic violence assault in progress in the 800 block of Jenkintown Road. The Montgomery County Communications Center advised officers that a victim arrived at the Second Alarmer's Rescue Squad ambulance station with visible stab wounds, saying the actor and additional victims were reportedly still inside the residence.

Once on scene, officers secured the perimeter and had to force the front door of the residence. They encountered a male, Angel Luis Ortiz, a resident of the house, who refused to comply with officer's commands to show his hands. Instead Ortiz shouted an explicative at officers as well as, "I have a hostage" and ran into the basement. Officers reported hearing a female screaming, "Help me, help me!" Abington officers descended the stairs into the basement where Ortiz was standing over a female, who was on the ground bleeding. Officers observed Ortiz raise his right hand, holding what appeared to be a firearm. An officer shot the suspect multiple times. After rescuing the female victim and others from the home, officers provided aid to Ortiz, who died from the gunshot wounds. A black airsoft pistol designed to replicate a Beretta 9 mm handgun and a bloodstained wooden awl were recovered from the scene.

“Domestic violence situations can be some of the most dangerous calls a police officer responds to. These Abington police officers, knowing there were victims inside the house, ran in to save the adult and juvenile victims from additional harm,” said Steele. “The suspect was still actively assaulting individuals, refused police commands and pointed what appeared to be a gun toward police. The officer discharged his firearm to put a stop to the threat of death and serious injury to a hostage and Abington police officers. Our investigation determined the facts of this case supported the use of deadly force.”

In Pennsylvania, the use of deadly force by a law enforcement officer is governed by Section 508 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code. A law enforcement officer is “justified in using deadly force only when he believes that such force is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury to himself or such other person...” 18 Pa.C.S.A. §508(a). In addition, the use of deadly force by law enforcement officers is justified to defeat...the escape of a person who possesses a deadly weapon, or otherwise indicates that he will endanger human life or inflict serious bodily injury unless arrested without delay. 18 Pa.C.S.A. §508(a)(1)(i)(ii).

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.