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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JOSEPH BEZANIS OF TELFORD ARRESTED FOR HOMICIDE BY VEHICLE IN FATAL CRASH INTO FRANCONIA TOWNSHIP HOUSE



NORRISTOWN, Pa. (April 23, 2018)—Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Franconia Township Police Chief Joseph Kozeniewski announce the arrest of Joseph Bezanis, 21, of Telford, Pa., on charges of Homicide by Vehicle DUI, DUI, Reckless Endangerment of Other Persons, Reckless Driving and other charges related to an April 6, 2018 crash into a Harleysville Pike home that killed an 86-year-old woman while she was sleeping. At 12:02 a.m., April 6, Franconia Township Police responded to a call of a vehicle that had crashed into a house at 349 Harleysville Pike. Responding officers found that a 1995 Toyota had left the roadway and broke through a cement block/siding wall and completely entered a first-

floor bedroom. The victim, Marianne Lambert, was found crushed against an interior wall and was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the Toyota was transported to Lehigh Valley Trauma Center for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

A joint investigation of the crash by Franconia Township Police and Montgomery County Detective Bureau determined that the car operated by Bezanis was traveling westbound on Harleysville Pike and failed to navigate a curve in the roadway. The vehicle jumped the curve into the lawn at 325 Harleysville Pike, then continued across three additional lawns traveling 539 feet before becoming airborne and vaulting 21 feet into the side wall of the house. Analysis of the tire tracks indicated no signs of steering input by the driver and no signs of braking action, but did show signs of acceleration as the car proceeded deeper into the soft lawns. A post-crash inspection of the car determined that there were no mechanical problems with the vehicle.

Toxicology results on the defendant's blood revealed a BAC of .172 percent, as well as the presence of THC, the major active component of marijuana and cannabis. Additionally, the investigation revealed that Bezanis was operating his vehicle at high speed, with the analysis indicating a minimum average speed of 83 mph prior to going airborne. The speed limit is 40 mph.

Crash investigators determined that the cause of the crash was directly related to the combination of Bezanis' level of impairment as well as the speed at which he was operating his vehicle. "The defendant's decision to use marijuana as well as drink at a local bar turned deadly when he got behind the wheel of his vehicle and drove impaired," said Steele. "The defendant turned his vehicle into a lethal weapon that killed a grandmother as she was sleeping in her bed. His actions have left a family without a matriarch and have forever affected their feelings of safety in their own home."

Bezanis was arraigned today before Magisterial District Judge Maureen C. Coggins, who set bail at \$100,000 unsecured. Additional requirements of bail include not allowed to operate a vehicle and not permitted to have alcohol or controlled substance. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m., April 30, 2018 before Magisterial District Judge Albert J. Augustine.

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.