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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JONATHAN TUNNELL ARRESTED FOR FIRST-DEGREE MURDER, OTHER CHARGES RELATED TO HOMICIDE AT KING OF PRUSSIA HOTEL



JONATHAN TUNNELL

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (June 16, 2021) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Upper Merion Police Chief Thomas Nolan announce the arrest of Jonathan Tunnell, 40, of Philadelphia, for the murder of Henry Palmen, 35, in a hotel room in King of Prussia on Monday.

On Monday, June 14, 2021, at 3:30 p.m., Upper Merion Police responded to the Fairfield Inn for a report that a maintenance man found a suspected overdose victim in one of the hotel rooms. Police arrived to find the victim, Henry Palmen, dead with a bleeding wound to the side of his head. Upon close inspection, police located a small-diameter bullet wound. Also found in the room were numerous packages of marijuana edibles and a large amount of white and orange pills. No cash was found.

Dr. Erica Williams, a forensic pathologist with the Montgomery County Coroner's Office, conducted an autopsy on the body of Palmen, which determined that he died of a gunshot wound to the head and the manner of death was homicide. Dr. Williams

also noted stippling between the left ear and eye indicating that Palmen was shot from close range.

Upper Merion Police and Montgomery County Detectives launched a joint investigation into the homicide. The investigation found that the victim and defendant had arranged a meeting to sell/buy illegal drugs. A male, later identified as Tunnell, was seen in surveillance video walking along Mall Boulevard near the Fairfield Inn at 10:26 a.m., and then seen again at 10:46 a.m., walking quickly in the opposite direction. While the male was wearing a mask and dark clothing, distinctive tattoos can be seen on both of his hands and match photos of his tattoos that detectives obtained from CPIN. Hotel personnel also saw Tunnell enter the hotel and elevator.

“Upper Merion Police did an outstanding job in their immediate actions in the hotel room. They secured needed evidence to quickly solve this murder, which appears to have happened during a drug deal gone bad,” said DA Steele. “This defendant was just released on parole last August and was wanted prior to this murder for violations to his parole and probation. Excellent and fast police work, with help from U.S. Marshalls, got this dangerous defendant off the streets.”

Tunnell was arrested by U.S. Marshalls near the Philadelphia airport this morning. He is charged with First-Degree Murder, Second-Degree Murder, Third-Degree Murder, Person Not to Possess a Firearm, Possessing an Instrument of Crime and related charges. He was arraigned before Magisterial District Judge William Maruszczak. There is no bail available for First-Degree Murder, and the defendant was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m., June 28, 2021 before Judge Maruszczak.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Allison Ruth and Gabriella Hughes.

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.