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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **SYMERE BUTLER ARRESTED FOR HOMICIDE BY VEHICLE, DUI FOR AUGUST 3<sup>rd</sup> FATAL POTTSTOWN CRASH**



**SYMERE BUTLER**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Sept. 16, 2021) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Pottstown Police Chief Mick Markovich announce the arrest of Symere Butler, 30, of Pottstown, for Homicide by Vehicle–DUI and related charges in the crash that killed 36-year-old Nicole Benzenhafer.

On Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021, at approximately 10:18 p.m., a pedestrian flagged down a Pottstown Police car to report a crash at nearby Queen and Madison streets. The officer arrived at the crash scene three blocks away and found the crash involved a parked Toyota Tacoma truck, a Chevrolet Equinox driven by 36-year-old Nicole Benzenhafer, and a Chevrolet Impala, driven by defendant Symere Butler. Benzenhafer had to be extracted from the Equinox and was then transported to Reading Hospital, where she was pronounced dead. Butler crawled out of his vehicle and was transported to Reading Hospital, where he was treated and later released. The Tacoma was legally parked and unoccupied at the time of the crash.

The ensuing crash investigation and reconstruction by Pottstown Police and Montgomery County Detectives determined that the Impala driven by Butler had been proceeding westbound on Queen Street approaching the intersection with

Madison Street, traveling between 71 and 73 miles per hour in a 25-mile-per-hour zone. Due to the excessive speed, the Impala went airborne at the intersection, landing on the opposite side of the intersection, now traveling westbound in the eastbound lane of Queen Street. The Butler vehicle then hit the Equinox driven by Benzenhafer in a violent head-on impact, forcing the Equinox to travel 108 feet before coming to a rest facing eastbound in the westbound lane. The Butler vehicle then struck the parked Tacoma pick-up truck before coming to a rest.

Toxicology tests conducted on Butler's blood showed that his blood contained fentanyl and THC. The crash investigation determined that Butler's level of impairment as well as the speed and manner in which he was operating his vehicle, without a driver's license, was the cause of the crash that killed Benzenhafer. Butler was arrested and charged with Homicide by Vehicle While Under the Influence, Accident Involving Death While Not Licensed, DUI and related charges. He was arraigned by Magisterial District Judge Edward Kropp Sr., who set bail at \$500,000 cash. A preliminary hearing was scheduled for 8 a.m., Sept. 23, 2021 before Judge Kropp.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Bridget Gallagher, a member of the Pottstown Community Justice Unit.

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.*