



July 22, 2020

## **DELAWARE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES ARREST IN CHILD ABUSE CASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

**Media, PA-** Delaware County District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer today announced the arrest of David Nelson, 42, and Colette Benel, 41, both of Wallingford, each on two counts of felony child abuse inflicted on their twin infant daughters. These charges arise from an investigation by the DA's Criminal Investigation Division (CID) which determined that the three-month-old twins had each suffered fractured bones inflicted by the defendants.

"Injuries to children are always heartbreaking – but to three-month old infants, such injuries at the hands of their parents are unconscionable," said Stollsteimer. "Infants are utterly defenseless - which is why it is so important that we stepped in to protect them."

On May 2, 2020, the Nether Providence Police Department was contacted by the Delaware County's Department of Children and Youth Services after being alerted to the suspected child abuse by the team at the Alfred I Dupont Children's Hospital. The facts alleged in the criminal complaint state that one of the infants arrived at the hospital by ambulance on May 5 as a result of a pediatrician's concern over a rapidly spreading rash. In connection with her initial examination, a skeletal survey was performed, which revealed four healing rib fractures. Shortly thereafter, the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) opened a child abuse investigation. On May 7, the parents were directed by the team at Dupont Hospital to bring the infant's twin sister to the hospital for examination. No signs of abuse were found. On May 11, accompanied by counsel, the parents were interviewed at the Office of the District Attorney. The parents stated that they had no knowledge of any inappropriate handling of the either infant by themselves, or by anyone else.

On May 21, during a follow-up visit to Dupont Hospital, a skeletal survey was completed on both twins. CID Detective Michael Palmer was advised by the examining doctor that the survey revealed that the twin that had previously shown no sign of injury now showed signs of three healing rib fractures. The doctor stated that the rib fractures were similar to those on the original victim twin, and were approximately seven to ten days old.

On July 21, 2020, the parents, David Nelson and Colette Benel, turned themselves in at the Media Courthouse with their attorney.

The parents were arraigned by District Justice Robert Burke and bail was set at \$50,000 cash. Both parents were subsequently committed to George Hill Correctional Facility after failing to post bail.

District Attorney Stollsteimer concluding by adding, "I want to thank the hardworking members of my staff, the staff at Children and Youth Services, Sgt. Robin Clark, Det. Michael Palmer, and Special Victims Unit Chief Christopher Boggs. This case is a stark reminder of the important work that our professionals continue to provide, even as we continue to manage the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic."

The District Attorney and the Criminal Investigations Division remind anyone in Delaware County who observes suspicious activity call to 911 immediately and provide the most specific and accurate details possible to assist law enforcement agencies investigating the call for service.

For press inquiries, contact Margie McAboy, Public Information Officer, 610-579-0429.

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