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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **TWO MEN ARRESTED FOR SEPT. 18 NORRISTOWN MURDER OF INNOCENT BYSTANDER BARRY FIELDS; Detectives looking for two additional shooters**



**BRANDON DARDEN**



**JOSHUA AGUDIO, JR.**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Sept. 30, 2021) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Norristown Acting Police Chief Todd Dillon announce the arrest of Brandon Darden, 25, and Joshua Agudio Jr., 20, both of Norristown, on First-Degree Murder and other charges related to the Sept. 18, 2021 shootout in the 600 block of Astor Street that killed 51-year-old Barry Fields on the steps of his residence. An arrest warrant has also been issued for Edwin Islas-Cruz, 23, of Norristown, for First-Degree Murder and other charges. A fourth shooter is still under investigation.

The murder happened on Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021. Norristown Police were dispatched at 5:21 p.m. to the 600 block of Astor Street for shots fired. The 911 caller reported hearing approximately 20 shots fired. Responding officers found the victim, Barry Fields, lying deceased on the sidewalk in front of his residence at 641 Astor Street.

A joint homicide investigation was launched by Montgomery County Detectives and Norristown Police. The investigation, through witness interviews and video

surveillance, found that two males pulled up in a Toyota Camry, exited the vehicle and began firing shots north on Astor Street, where a group of males were hanging out in front of 653 Astor Street. Two of the men who had been hanging out—who were identified as Brandon Darden and Joshua Agudio—returned fire. After the burst of gunfire, the two men got back into the black Camry and sped away. Detectives recovered 39 fired 9mm cartridge cases (FCCs) of various colors and brands. The investigation found that the victim, who was in no way involved in the shooting, had been sitting on the steps of his home—and was struck in the head when gunfire erupted.

The investigation identified the Toyota Camry involved in the shooting. Through surveillance video, witness accounts and other investigative means, detectives identified the shooters who drove up in the Camry as Edwin Islas-Cruz and a second, still unidentified male. The investigation also found that there was an ongoing dispute between at least two of the men involved.

An autopsy on Fields' body was performed on Sept. 19, 2021 by Forensic Pathologist Dr. Khalil Wardak with the Montgomery County Coroner's Office, which found that the cause of death was a single gunshot wound to the head and the manner of death was homicide.

“Mr. Fields was murdered while sitting on the steps of his residence on a sunny Saturday afternoon, when these defendants decided to take out their disagreement with each other using guns, and they subsequently killed Mr. Fields,” said DA Steele. “There is no place for this kind of dangerous Wild West shootout in Norristown or anywhere in Montgomery County. We will find the other two shooters and seek justice for the murder of an innocent bystander by prosecuting all four men.”

Darden was charged with First-Degree Murder, Third-Degree Murder and Person Not to Possess a Firearm. He was arraigned on Sept. 27, 2021 before Magisterial District Judge Margaret Hunsicker. No bail is available for First-Degree Murder, and he was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m., Oct. 7, 2021 before Magisterial District Judge Greg Scott.

Agudio was charged with First-Degree Murder, Third-Degree Murder and Person Not to Possess a Firearm. He was arraigned on Sept. 30, 2021 before Magisterial District Judge Cathleen Kelly Rebar. No bail is available for First-Degree Murder, and he was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m., Oct. 5, 2021 before Magisterial District Judge Francis J. Lawrence.

An arrest warrant was issued for Edwin Islas-Cruz. Islas-Cruz is a 23-year-old Hispanic male, who is 5-7 tall and 210 pounds. He should be considered armed and dangerous. If he is spotted, call 911 immediately.

Anyone with information regarding this incident or the whereabouts of Islas-Cruz is asked to contact the Norristown Police Department at 610-270-0977 or call the Montgomery County Detectives' Tip Line at 610-278-DOIT (3638). Anonymous text tips can be submitted using MontcoCrimeTips on the STOPit! app. The STOPit! app can be downloaded for free from the App Store for iPhones or Google Play for Androids, then use code MONTCOPA to get the Montgomery County version of the app.

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.*