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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **BLAIR WATTS ARRESTED FOR MURDER OF JENNIFER BROWN**



**BLAIR WATTS**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Feb. 9, 2023) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Limerick Township Police Chief Robert J. Matalavage announce the arrest of Blair Watts, 33, of Hunsberger Drive in Royersford, for First-Degree Murder and other charges related to the murder of 43-year-old Jennifer Brown of Limerick Township. Brown's body was found on Jan. 18, 2023, buried in a shallow grave behind a warehouse on North 5th Avenue in Royersford.

The investigation into Brown's disappearance and ultimate death began on Jan. 4, 2023, when she was reported missing to police by Watts, who was Brown's supposed friend and business partner in a planned re-opening of a restaurant called "Birdies Kitchen." Watts told police Brown failed to get her 8-year-old son off the school bus that afternoon after the boy had spent the night at Watts' residence for a planned sleepover to "give Brown a break." Yet Brown, who was described as an attentive and loving mother, had not sent any clothing or the boy's necessary daily medications with him for the sleepover. At the time Brown was reported missing, her vehicle, keys, wallet, purse and work cellphone were all located, and the only significant missing item was her personal cellphone. Detectives also determined that Watts had a spare set of keys to Brown's residence.

The initial search of Brown's house by police found no obvious signs of a struggle. Police K-9 cadaver dog Patton, who is trained to detect the presence of human remains, was brought into the home, and he indicated in the kitchen area of Brown's residence as well as by a trash dumpster outside of Brown's townhouse. Montgomery County detectives examined the interior of Brown's home for forensic evidence related to her disappearance and found several black-and-white, marble-patterned plastic pieces embedded within the high-pile carpet just outside of the kitchen where the cadaver dog had indicated the presence of human remains. The pieces were ultimately determined to be broken off pieces of a hair clip that was found in the shallow grave with Brown's body.

An autopsy was conducted on Brown's body on Jan. 19, 2023, by Dr. Ian Hood, a forensic pathologist with the Montgomery County Coroner's Office. Montgomery County Coroner Dr. Michael Milbourne had opined that the manner of death was homicide. Following the review of toxicology, the Coroner's Office found the cause of death to be homicide by unspecified means. During the autopsy, Dr. Hood noted that Brown had three broken ribs.

The joint investigation by the Limerick Township Police and Montgomery County Detectives found that during the late afternoon of Jan. 3, 2023, Watts picked up Brown's 8-year-old son from the school bus, telling him that his mom was at the grocery store, and he was going to sleep over at Watts' house. Watts and the boy drove to Brown's townhome, and Watts went inside while the boy waited in the vehicle. Detectives learned that when Watts returned to the car, the boy noticed "Mr. Blair" had his mom's personal cellphone, which he recognized since the phone has his school photo as its lock screen image. Cellphone data showed that Watts' cellphone and Brown's personal cellphone traveled together away from Brown's residence, before returning a short time later.

The investigation found that at 6:37 a.m., on Jan. 4, 2023, Watts' cellphones traveled again to Brown's townhome and then began traveling in tandem with Brown's cellphone out of Brown's townhome complex. The cellphones then registered activity in the area of North Lewis Road and West Ridge Pike at approximately 7 a.m., before Brown's cellphone became inactive.

Detectives learned that Watts drove a grey Jeep Renegade, owned by his wife, and a red Jeep Cherokee. Search warrants were obtained for both vehicles. The cadaver dog Patton indicated on the backseat area of the Jeep Cherokee and indicated on the floor mat taken from behind the driver's seat in the Jeep Renegade, meaning that human remains had previously been in each of the Jeeps known to be driven by Watts.

Detectives also investigated the planned joint business venture between Brown and Watts. On Aug. 28, 2022, Brown entered into a business partnership agreement with Watts to invest money in Watts' restaurant "Birdies Kitchen," which they were planning to open at the end of January 2023 in a building in Phoenixville. Detectives found that on the afternoon of Jan. 3, 2023, the day before Brown was reported missing, two cash transfers were made to accounts controlled by Watts. CashApp records show a transfer of \$9,000 went through to "\$Birdieskitchen" at 4:23 p.m. A second transfer of \$8,000 via Zelle was completed at 4:35 p.m. to "Birdies." This total of \$17,000 was never part of a written agreement between Brown and Watts.

The two owners of the Phoenixville property told detectives that they met with Watts in August 2022 about renting their property, but they never signed a lease with Watts, received money from Watts or gave Watts a key to the property, although they did allow Watts to hang a banner on the building and store some equipment outside. No renovation work had been done on the building by Watts to ready it to open as a restaurant. On Dec. 28, 2022, one of the property owners told Watts that they would not be moving forward with the lease and a series of exchanges occurred with Watts threatening to sue. The property owner told detectives that on Jan. 4, 2023, Watts showed up at the property unannounced, “now saying he had money to put down on a lease.”

“For 37 days since this devoted mother was reported missing, detectives have been accumulating evidence, piece by piece, bringing into focus what happened to Jennifer and who murdered her,” said DA Steele. “That picture shows Blair Watts murdered Jennifer Brown on Jan. 3rd, then moved her body and ultimately buried her in a shallow grave. He is now behind bars at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility.”

Watts was arrested this morning on charges of First-Degree Murder, Third-Degree Murder, Theft by Unlawful Taking/Disposition and Access Device Fraud. He is awaiting arraignment at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing will be scheduled at that time.

The case will be prosecuted by First Assistant District Attorney Edward F. McCann Jr. and Assistant District Attorney Lindsey T. Mills.

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.*