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Thomas P. Hogan  
District Attorney

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Arrest Made in "Afghan Girl" Art Theft**

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan announced the arrest of defendant Bree DeStephano for theft and related offenses. The defendant was an employee of Steve McCurry Studios, LLC ("SMS"), located in Exton, West Whiteland Township. Steve McCurry is an internationally renowned photographer who travels to remote areas of the world to take his photographs. One of McCurry's best-known photographs is the *Afghan Girl*, which was on the cover of *National Geographic*. The defendant stole prints, books, and other items from SMS and sold them for her own profit. The total value of the stolen items is \$654,358.02.

District Attorney Hogan stated, "The theft of intellectual property, like photographs, is an ever-growing problem. In order to take photographs like the *Afghan Girl*, Steve McCurry was exposed to extraordinary risks, tremendous costs, and spent years of his career. Then the defendant casually abused her position of trust to make some easy money, without a thought to the damage to Mr. McCurry."

The defendant is 32 years old. She resides at 1917 West Market Street, York, Pennsylvania. She was employed as the Manager of Fine Art Print Sales at SMS. She was terminated from her position as soon as these criminal allegations arose.

The allegations from the criminal complaint<sup>1</sup> are as follows:

Between May 2012 and November 2013, the defendant stole various limited edition photograph prints from SMS. This ongoing theft involved a conspiracy to dispose of the stolen prints between the defendant and Brandon Donahue. At the time of the

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<sup>1</sup> A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

thefts, Mr. Donahue was the manager of Open Shutter Gallery located in Durango, Colorado.

The defendant stole 50 prints with a total value of \$628,000. The defendant had prints shipped directly from SMS Long Island City Studio in New York to her at the Exton studio. These prints were then sold without authorization for her own financial gain. The defendant also altered SMS inventory records and print edition numbers. The stolen prints included the following: *Afghan Girl*, *Vertical Dust Storm*, *The Blue City*, and *Bengali Woman and Child*.

The defendant also stole 233 Steve McCurry books of different titles and other items valued at \$23,196.14. The defendant sold these items through various aliases on various websites.

District Attorney Hogan added, “Mr. McCurry and SMS staff did an excellent job of reporting this theft and cooperating with the District Attorney’s Office. As a result, law enforcement was able to uncover the scope of the defendant’s thefts and recover photographs and prints. Other victims of art theft or other intellectual property crimes need to know that law enforcement can help not only to catch the criminals, but also to minimize the intangible damages to reputation and to deter future crimes. Working together with law enforcement agencies across the nation, the Chester County Detectives have the capability to track down these complex crimes.”

The defendant was arrested today and arraigned before Magisterial District Judge John R. Bailey. Bail was set at \$250,000 unsecured. Defendant Brandon Donahue will be charged by authorities in Colorado, who have worked extensively with the Chester County District Attorney’s Office.

This case has been investigated by the Chester County Detectives. Anybody with any further information should contact Chester County Detective Martin Carbonell at 610-344-6866.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan