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PRESS RELEASE

Firefighter from East Coventry Charged With Sexual Abuse of Minor

The Chester County District Attorney's Office, Chester County Detectives, and East Coventry Police Department announced the arrest of Carlton Raye Bell, Jr., for multiple counts of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, statutory sexual assault, unlawful contact with a minor, and related offenses. The defendant was a Battalion Chief at the North Coventry Fire Company and served as a volunteer firefighter at Limerick, Ridge, and Goodwill, in Pottstown, Fire Companies. He has been suspended from all fire companies.

District Attorney Deb Ryan stated, "The District Attorney's Office is deeply committed to the protection and safety of children. Along with law enforcement throughout this county, we will continue to be vigilant in helping this vulnerable population. We are grateful for the collective efforts of law enforcement in the swift apprehension of the defendant in this case."

The allegations from the criminal complaint¹ are as follows:

On December 24, 2019, the East Coventry Police Department received information that a fourteen year old child created an online dating

¹ A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

account through “Grindr” and communicated with an adult male, later identified as the defendant. During these communications, the child represented that he was 15 years old. At the defendant’s request, and because of the child’s age, the two continued their conversation on Snap Chat so that the communications would disappear quickly. Later, the child and defendant exchanged nude photographs and arranged to meet for a sexual encounter. On September 15, 2019, the defendant picked up the child at his home in East Caln Township and transported the child to the defendant’s residence in East Coventry Township. There, the defendant engaged in sexual acts with the child.

On September 19, 2019, the defendant created a group chat with the victim and two other suspected minors, believed to be 16 and 17 year old, on Snap Chat. That day the defendant picked up the victim in East Caln Township. The two other minors from the previous Snap Chat group were already in the defendant’s vehicle. The defendant transported all three to his home in East Coventry Township. There, the defendant engaged in sexual activity with the victim and the other suspected minors. The defendant stated to the victim that he was nervous to engage in the sexual acts with the child because he could go to jail for what they were about to do.

The defendant is 27 years old and single.

The defendant was arrested on January 17, 2020, and arraigned before Magisterial District Judge John Bailey, who set bail at \$150,000 cash. The defendant was ordered to have no contact with the victim or any other minor, and to have no contact with any fire company. Additionally, the defendant is prohibited from using the internet or social media, or visiting any place where minors may be. The defendant was unable to post bail and was remanded to Chester County Prison. A preliminary hearing is scheduled on January 23, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. at District Court, 15-3-01, before Magisterial District Judge Hipple in Pottstown.

This case was investigated by the Chester County Detectives and the East Coventry Police Department. It is assigned to Assistant District Attorney Emily Provencher from the Chester County District Attorney’s Child Abuse Unit. Anyone with information regarding these or other incidents involving the defendant should contact Chester County Detective Joseph Walton at (610) 344-6866.

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Approved for release:

Deborah Ryan
District Attorney