

Chester County District Attorney's Office

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NEWS RELEASE

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JUVENILE ARRESTED FOR BOMB THREAT AT CASH

The Chester County District Attorney's Office and Caln Township Police Department announce the arrest of a 17-year-old from Valley Township in connection to a recent threat of violence to Coatesville Area High School (CASH) that occurred on Oct. 17, 2022. The juvenile is a senior at CASH. He was charged with two counts of terroristic threats, two counts of threats to use weapons of mass destruction, and criminal use of a communication facility, all felonies. He was also charged with one count of false reports, a misdemeanor. This was the 14th notification of a threat or a tip of potential violence at CASH during a three-week period, causing lockdowns, evacuations, and the cancellation of school and student activities. The investigation into the other threats is still ongoing.

DA Deb Ryan said, "CASH students, teachers, staff, and parents have been anxious and on high alert for three weeks because of persistent and scary threats of violence that have disrupted school and the lives of everyone associated with CASH. An army of law enforcement agencies from Chester County, including Caln Twp. PD, the FBI, and the Office of the Attorney General worked tirelessly to determine the source of these threats, and I thank them for their hard work and dedication. I also thank Interim Superintendent Rick Dunlap and the Coatesville Area School District (CASD) for working closely with my office to bring this investigation to an end. Threats of violence against schools – especially in this day and age – will never be tolerated. My office is determined to ensure the safety of students when they go to school every day."

The allegations include the following¹: On Oct. 17, 2022, an anonymous report was made to the Safe2Say Something PA (Safe2Say) website that stated, “Someone has a boom bag full of glass bottles, THE GLASS BOTTLES ARE FULL OF GAS AND ALCOHOL AND a lot OF TISSUES he said he’s gonna light it off at 12.” Investigators tracked the IP address of a threat made to the Safe2Say website that day to the guest Wi-Fi at the Technical College High School (TCHS) on Boot Road in Downingtown. They found that an iPhone of the juvenile accessed the IP address at TCHS on Oct. 17. Video surveillance from TCHS on Oct. 17 also depicts the juvenile at the school when the threat was made.

Between Sept. 29, 2022, and Oct. 17, 2022, Safe2Say received 14 threats of violence directed at CASH which led to the lockdown, evacuation, and/or cancellation of school or other student activities on at least three occasions. The threats included students possessing firearms and threatening to use them at CASH, bomb threats, and the use of other incendiary devices. None of the threats materialized, and police determined that each was a false report.

Dr. Rick Dunlap, Interim Superintendent of CASD, stated, “We are extremely grateful to the Chester County District Attorney’s Office and to all the local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies that have supported us through this difficult time. We hope this arrest sends a clear message that anyone responsible for making these threats will face serious consequences, both by the judicial system and, if they are a student, our school system. Our school district is comprised of eager and dynamic students who care very deeply about their education. We will not allow these disruptions to cast a negative light on our student body.”

Caln Twp Chief Joe Elias said, “We assured the community that every threat would be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated, and anyone responsible would be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The threats continued and

¹ A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

culminated in a very dangerous situation at the campus on Monday. We trust that this arrest will restore a sense of normalcy to the community and our school district and put anyone on notice who is contemplating similar behavior that it will be treated with zero tolerance. We will continue to use every resource at our disposal to hold them accountable. I thank District Attorney Ryan, Superintendent Dunlap, and our many law enforcement partners at the local, county, state, and federal level for their support and perseverance during this three-week investigation.”

Chester County Detectives, Caln Twp PD, the Sheriff’s Dept., the Attorney General’s Office, the FBI, the Department of Emergency Services, Chester County Fire Marshall, ATF, Pa. State Police, and other agencies helped investigate.

If you have any information regarding this investigation, please contact Chester County Detectives at 610-344-6866.

This case is assigned to Deputy District Attorney Renee Merion.

Approved for release by Deborah Ryan, District Attorney