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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 31, 2024

**NORTH EAST MAN SENTENCED TO 50 YEARS FOR
PRODUCTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

ELKTON- On Wednesday, October 30, 2024, James Shipley, 48, of North East, MD was sentenced in the Circuit Court for Cecil County to 50 years for 4 counts of Sex Abuse of a Minor and 2 counts of Production of Child Pornography. Shipley had previously entered a guilty plea to those counts on August 26, 2024.

On February 26, 2024, the Maryland State Police Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Taskforce received approximately 30 CyberTips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reporting possible possession and distribution of child sex abuse material (child pornography) on Motherless.com, a free file sharing website. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children operates the CyberTipline, a centralized reporting system where members of the public and partnered electronic service providers can report suspected online abuse of children, including online enticement, possession of child sexual abuse materials, trafficking, and obscene materials being distributed to children. The CyberTips in this case included an IP address for the uploaded materials, which investigators were able to geo-locate to the Defendant's North East address. A review of the materials led investigators to believe that the images were newly created, and depicted a child in the residence.

Later that same day, members of the Maryland State Police ICAC Taskforce executed a search warrant on the Defendant's residence. There, they identified the subject of the materials as a minor child living in the residence. The child disclosed in an interview with the Department of Social Services and the Cecil County Child Advocacy Center that Shipley had taken the images of her. Investigators seized and forensically analyzed Shipley's phone and computer, which recovered several images of the child, all of which depicted child sexual abuse material. Forensic data extracted from the photos showed that Shipley created these images on November 22, 2023, November 28, 2023, January 12, 2024, and January 24, 2024. Several of the images matched the files that were referenced in the CyberTips. Forensic data also showed that Shipley had viewed the images on his phone multiple times prior to his arrest.

The Maryland Sentencing Guidelines for the crimes committed are 12 years to 20 years for each count of Sex Abuse of Minors, and 1 year to 6 years for each count of Production of Child Pornography, giving a total range of 48 years to 80 years. The State, represented by Assistant State's Attorney Zachary M. Payne, recommended a sentence of 70 years active incarceration, with an additional 10 years suspended, followed by 5 years of supervised probation upon release. As a result of these convictions, Shipley will be required to register as a Tier III Sex Offender for the remainder of his life. Additionally, he will be subject to lifetime sex offender supervision through the COMET program. Circuit Court Administrative Judge Brenda A. Sexton imposed a sentence of 50 years of active incarceration, with an additional 15 years suspended, followed by 5 years of supervised probation upon release.

State's Attorney James A. Dellmyer says of this sentence "Child abuse, in it of itself, is abhorrent in any form, however there is an added component of depravity when the abuse is documented and then widely distributed on an online platform. My office will continue to work tirelessly to protect the most vulnerable of our community and, at the same time, hold accountable those who seek to violate a child's trust and autonomy. It is my hope that this sentence sends a message to perpetrators that anyone who creates, traffics, or possesses this material will be prosecuted to the fullest extent. Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to Assistant State's Attorney Zachary M. Payne, the Department of Social Services, the Child Advocacy Center, the agents of the Department of Homeland Security, and the men and women of the Maryland State Police Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce for not simply doing their jobs, but for their collective mission in, and ongoing dedication to, protecting the children of this county."

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