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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2025

**CECIL COUNTY MAN SENTENCED TO 8 YEARS FOR
MANSLAUGHTER IN CROSSBOW SHOOTING OF GIRLFRIEND**

ELKTON- Tuesday, January 28, 2025, Jeffrey Allen Lander, 41, of Elkton, MD was sentenced in the Circuit Court of Cecil County to 8 years for involuntary (grossly negligent) manslaughter. Lander had been convicted in a jury trial of his peers on November 22, 2024, where he was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter and reckless endangerment. The jury acquitted Lander of the more serious charges of second-degree murder and assault.

On January 24, 2024, at approximately 4:40 p.m., members of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office and Department of Emergency Services responded to 743 Bell Manor Road in Conowingo for a report of a woman who had been accidentally shot with a hunting crossbow. Upon arrival, Deputies and paramedics identified the caller as Lander and his live-in girlfriend, Judy Elizabeth Gee, 45, as the victim suffering from injuries inflicted from a crossbow arrow that was protruding from her back. Judy was conscious but unable to provide any information to Deputies on the scene. Based on their location and weather conditions at the time, Judy was transported to Lancaster General Hospital, the closest trauma center to the scene of the crime. Judy underwent invasive medical intervention and surgery but was pronounced dead by surgeons at approximately 7:13 p.m. The Lancaster County Coroner declared her death a homicide.

The Defendant stated that Gee was shot with the crossbow when he removed it from the wall to leave the house to go hunting. Lander provided conflicting accounts of what happened, but it was ultimately determined that the crossbow had been stored on the wall in the cocked position, with a bolt (arrow) nocked and the safety mechanism switched off. Lander had tied or looped the cocking rope of the crossbow through the inside of the trigger guard and claimed that the cocking rope had gotten snagged and pulled the trigger while the crossbow was pointed towards Gee, who was sitting on a couch in the living room of the residence. Based on her condition, Gee was never able to provide an account of what happened to investigators or medical personnel.

The Maryland Sentencing Guidelines for involuntary manslaughter in this case are 3 to 8 years, with a maximum penalty of 10 years. The Court agreed with both the State and Defense that the reckless endangerment count would merge for sentencing with the involuntary manslaughter conviction. The State, represented by Assistant State's Attorney Robert E. Sentman, recommended the maximum sentence of 10 years to serve, representing an upward departure from the guidelines. Sentman cited a lack of remorse displayed by Lander during the investigation and failure to accept responsibility for Gee's death as a basis for his recommendation. Lander's defense attorney had requested the Court impose a sentence at the bottom of the guidelines or time-served, as Lander had been held without bond since his arrest for this case in June of 2024. Cecil County Circuit Court Administrative Judge Brenda A. Sexton imposed a sentence of 8 years to serve in the Division of Corrections, with no portion of the sentence suspended. The Court did not impose a period of probation upon Lander's release. Judge Sexton remarked from the bench that the Defendant's conduct was heinous and agreed that there was a lack of remorse or acceptance of responsibility for Gee's death. Gee was represented in the courtroom by friends and family, who had submitted victim impact statements on her behalf.