

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Former Postal Employee Re-Sentenced for Sexually Exploiting a Child

BOSTON – A former U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employee was re-sentenced yesterday in federal court in Worcester for sexually exploiting a child, using USPS computers to access child pornography and possessing child pornography.

Stephen Mantha, 66, of Spencer, was re-sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Timothy S. Hillman to 16 years and four months in prison and five years of supervised release. In February 2018, Mantha pleaded guilty to one count of producing child pornography, one count of accessing child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. An identical sentence was imposed in August 2018, but the sentence was vacated on appeal due to an error in calculating the federal sentencing guidelines.

In the summer of 2015, federal investigators were alerted to suspicious internet searches being conducted on a computer at a Shrewsbury postal facility where Mantha worked as an electronic technician. In the course of the investigation, agents installed a computer activity recorder, which tracked all computer usage on that computer, and, a video camera, which recorded the identity of the person using the computer. Agents were then able to observe and record as Mantha searched for, and viewed, child pornography on USPS computers.

On Sept. 21, 2016, a search warrant was executed at Mantha's residence where numerous thumb drives containing child pornography were recovered. During the review of the materials seized from Mantha's home, a video was discovered, which had been recorded in approximately 2000 or 2001, depicting Mantha sexually abusing an approximately seven-year-old boy. That same month, agents were able to locate and interview the boy (now an adult), who confirmed the sexual abuse.

In 2000 and 2001, at the date of the offense, the charge of sexual exploitation of a child provided for a mandatory minimum of 10 years and up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and

a fine of \$250,000. Although existing penalties for producing child pornography are substantially higher, the Constitution prohibits the government from subjecting individuals to more stringent penalties adopted after their crimes had been committed. The charges of accessing child pornography and possession of child pornography provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, five years and up to life of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Matthew Modafferi, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Postal Service, Office of the Inspector General, Northeast Area Office; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; Colonel Christopher Mason, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police; Spencer Police Chief David Darrin; and Shrewsbury Police Chief James Hester Jr. made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Grady of Lelling's Worcester Branch Office prosecuted the case.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In 2006, the Department of Justice created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

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