



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

Elkridge Man Found Guilty of Human Trafficking Women in a Howard County Motel

Howard County, MD (January 29, 2020) – Ronald Willis Cheek, age 49, was found guilty today by a jury in Howard County Circuit Court of four counts of human trafficking after engaging in the human trafficking of four women at an Elkridge motel last year.

In the late evening on July 10, 2019, Howard County Police received a tip about suspicious activity at the Terrace Motel in the 6200 block of Washington Blvd. Upon arrival, officers discovered four women ranging in age from 20 to 28 in the motel. Cheek was there as well. He was taken into custody on an open arrest warrant for fraud in Virginia. Once inside the rooms that the women stayed in, officers recognized signs of possible human trafficking. The women told police Cheek paid for the room and provided them with food, clothing and drugs. During their investigation, police discovered online prostitution ads with photos of the women. The trafficking victims would respond to the ads and arrange prostitution "dates." The women would then give all the money to Cheek.

In response to today's guilty verdict, Howard County State's Attorney Rich Gibson commented, "Human trafficking cases are very difficult to prove. The victims are often so traumatized they don't want to testify and that means predators, like Mr. Cheek, are able to continue their destructive behavior. I am grateful that in this case, through the efforts of our prosecution and Howard County Police, we were able to convince the jury of the true nature of Mr. Cheek's conduct."

Cheek will be sentenced on February 21, 2020 in Howard County Circuit Court.

Assistant State's Attorney Jennifer W. Ritter prosecuted the case.

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