



Ex-Cleveland police officer sentenced to 19 years in prison for videotaping sex with teen

locke.JPG

Former Cleveland police officer Charles Locke is shown here testifying in the case of convicted serial killer Anthony Sowell. Locke was sentenced to more than 19 years in prison Wednesday for videotaping himself having sex with a 15-year-old girl. (*The Plain Dealer*)

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on November 19, 2014 at 1:44 PM, updated November 19, 2014 at 1:45 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- A former Cleveland police officer was sentenced to 19½ years in prison Wednesday for **videotaping himself having sex with a 15-year-old girl** he met at a recreation center.

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Carolyn Friedland ordered Charles Locke to prison, citing the psychological damage he inflicted on the girl, as well as his abuse of the public trust.

Locke, 42, videotaped himself having sex with the girl while he was wearing his police uniform and hat, said Chris Schroeder, an assistant county prosecutor. Locke pleaded guilty last month to five counts of pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor, two counts of unlawful sexual conduct with a minor and one count of possessing criminal tools.

He had been with the department since 2007. He lost his job after his guilty plea.

In making her decision, Friedland cited the words of Carl Hartman, an internal affairs officer who investigated the case. Hartman blasted Locke for abusing his position of trust and preying on a young girl. He said Locke became a police officer to exploit the system.

"At best, Charles Locke is an embarrassment to his loyal friends and co-workers," Hartman said. "He is a cancer among the proud, honest and hard-working members of the Cleveland Division of Police. Ultimately, Locke is an aberration to the good citizens of the city of Cleveland. Charles Locke is a monster."

Locke, in a rambling, disjointed statement to Friedland, said he was exhausted from working 90 hours a week, as a police officer and at other jobs. He said he slept as little as three hours a night.

He begged the judge to take into consideration his life before the incidents with the girl.

"This is not who I am," Locke said. "I was out of my mind."

His attorney, Deanna Robertson, said Locke "is a man, not a monster." He made an isolated, unfortunate mistake, she said.

"He lost touch with reality," Robertson said.

Locke looked at the girl's parents and apologized to her family, "I'm ashamed ... I am so sorry."

Robertson said Locke lived an exemplary life, as he was a true asset to the city. He was never disciplined as a police officer, she said. A few years after joining the force, Locke gained notoriety by arresting **Cleveland serial killer** Anthony Sowell in 2009. He later testified in the case.

The girl did not attend the hearing. Instead, she wrote a letter that a counselor read. The girl said she trusted Locke. She has struggled in school and is depressed. Her grades bounce up and down.

"I can't concentrate," she wrote.

She moved out of her father's home.

The girl's parents told Friedland that the girl went to an East Side recreation center to play basketball. She was so good, her mother said, that coaches wanted to put her on boys' teams. It was at the rec center where the girl met Locke, who was working security. She said he betrayed the girl.

The family became suspicious of Locke after the girl's father said he had heard rumors that Locke had developed relationships with girls at the rec center. The girl also was spotted near Locke's car.

"I'm so furious with you right now," the girl's mother said to Locke. But she and the girl's father both said they forgive him for what he did.

"I have sympathy and empathy toward you," the girl's mother said.

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