

# Ex-cop used to investigate crimes against children. He's now going to prison for crimes against children

[By Jessica De Leon](#) February 08, 2018 04:28 PM , Updated February 09, 2018 12:37 PM



Gerald Leirer *Provided photo*

## ***Bradenton***

A retired Manatee County Sheriff's Office sergeant who used to investigate crimes against children has been sentenced to 44 years in prison for having sex with two teenage girls and possessing child pornography.

Gerald Lee Leirer, 67, was convicted of three counts of sexual battery, two counts of lewd and lascivious molestation, two counts of lewd or lascivious

battery, two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and 10 counts of possession of child pornography after he pleaded no contest in December. Leirer was sentenced on Feb. 2.

Leirer retired from the sheriff's office in 1999, and at one time was the supervisor of the Crimes Against Children Unit.

"As a retired MSO sergeant, Gerald Leirer was sworn to uphold the law. At one point in his career he supervised the Crimes Against Children Unit, which would include the very crimes he committed," Assistant State Attorney Julie Binkley said in an issued statement. "Gerald Leirer, out of anyone, should have known the devastating impact his crimes would have on the victims and their families."

On multiple occasions between July 1, 2014, and Feb. 14, 2015, Lierer had the two underage girls at his home and watched while they had sex with each other. Leirer also had sex with the girls.

Both victims testified about the sexual abuse at Leirer's sentencing hearing last week.

"I am impressed with the courage of these two young girls; to come forward and disclose their abuse at a time in their lives that is rough enough for the average teen," Binkley told the Bradenton Herald on Thursday.

"They spoke at the sentencing with such strength and eloquence, although at times through tears, as to how the experience has impacted them. They both have a lot of healing ahead of them, but they are strong and they will get there in time," Binkley said.

After Leirer was arrested in 2015, Bradenton police found thousands of images and videos of child pornography on Leirer's computer when they

executed a search warrant at his home. Among the images were photos and videos Leirer had taken of the victims, according to Bradenton Police Detective Kevin Bunch, who is a member of the FBI Child Exploitation Task Force.

Given his prior career in law enforcement, Bunch said there is the possibility of more victims.

"To find someone who had done this line of work, would do this to a child or actually possess child pornography, is really disgusting and troubling," Bunch said Thursday.

Bunch said the case was the result of a good investigation by his department, great prosecution by Binkley and the impressive courage of the victims.

"The victims did a phenomenal job in court," Bunch said.

Anyone who has information about this case or Gerald Lee Leirer can call Bradenton Police Detective Kevin Bunch at [941-932-9380](tel:941-932-9380). Information can also be emailed to [crimetips@cityofbradenton.com](mailto:crimetips@cityofbradenton.com).