

# Cleveland police officer who sexually abused teenagers battling drug addictions sentenced to 8 years in prison

By [Cory Shaffer, cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com/cory-shaffer/) Posted Aug 27, 2019



Mario Lozada, who retired from his position as a Cleveland police officer after his 2018 arrest, was sentenced to eight years in prison Tuesday for sexually abusing a teenage girl and soliciting nude photographs from another girl.

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- A now-retired Cleveland police officer and former

youth softball coach who sexually abused a teenage girl and solicited nude photographs from another teenage girl was sentenced Tuesday to eight years in prison.

[Mario Lozada](#), 55, preyed upon young and vulnerable girls wrestling with drug addiction, and gave them alcohol and drugs to solicit sexual encounters.

"You are a manipulative pedophile," one of the girls wrote to Lozada in a letter that her mother aloud in court.

Lozada pleaded guilty in July to multiple felony charges including unlawful sexual conduct with a minor, child pornography, promoting prostitution and other charges. He must register as a sex offender every six months for the next 25 years.

"The most egregious part of this whole case, is Mr. Lozada preyed upon the very people he took an oath to protect," Assistant Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Jeffrey Schnatter said. "He fed their addiction, and used that addiction to satisfy his own sexual needs."

Lozada, a veteran of the U.S. military who retired from the Cleveland police department after 20 years of service, asked for probation. Defense attorney Paul Daiker cited Lozada's service and the fact the he risked his life "every day he walked out the door" to go to work.

"You cannot erase all the good he has done for this country, and for the community," Daiker said.

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Judge Steve Gall rejected that request. He pointed to multiple reporters covering the hearing and said Lozada tarnished the entire police department.

"Why do you think they're here," Gall said of the media. "We have cases similar to this nearly every day in this courtroom. They're here because you're a Cleveland police officer. So yeah, everybody in uniform today is taking a hit for you today."

Lozada was arrested Nov. 14 during a traffic stop by Garfield Heights police as he pulled into Jack C. Donovan Park about 11:45 p.m. with a 14-year-old girl in his SUV. His Cleveland police uniform, badge and gun were in the backseat.

Prosecutors said Cleveland police's internal affairs detectives continued investigating the case after his arrest and found that Lozada gave the girl alcohol and paid to have sex with her several times during a five-month span from July to November. The girl was 14 when their encounters began, court records say.

He is also accused of recording at least one of their encounters.

Investigators searched Lozada's phone and found that he solicited and received four nude photos of a 17-year-old girl between November 2017 and January 2018, prosecutors said.

He also illegally used the national Law Enforcement Agency Database System while he was still a police officer, prosecutors said.

He retired from Cleveland police shortly after the arrest.

One of the girls wrote a letter that her mother read aloud at the sentencing.

"You caught me at a weak moment in my life, and use my weakness, ignorance, and sickness to your advantage," the girl, who is now 19 years old and in treatment in a different state, wrote.

The girl's mother added a thought of her own after she finished the letter.

"I just want to say how sad I am that a police officer, after her father and I did everything we could to pull her out of a dark place, was pulling against me to keep her there," she said.

Cleveland City Councilman Brian Kazy read a joint letter from the heads of the Tri-League and West Denison Baseball youth league, where Lozada coached youth softball for a decade up until 2018. The letter said the league was shocked and disgusted by Lozada's actions. The letter asked Gall to impose the maximum sentence.

"The crimes you committed are what we as parents most fear happening to our children," the letter said. "Our parents trusted him with our daughters, and for many, that betrayal cannot be undone."

Kazy, who said he coached against Lozada, said his daughter and her friends looked up to Lozada from their time in the league, and cried when the allegations against him went public.

"If we as citizens, as a community, cannot trust a police officer, better yet somebody who portrayed themselves as being trustworthy around young girls, then as a society, who can we trust?" Kazy asked.

Daiker and Lozada's family had asked Gall to release Lozada on probation. Lozada's brother, David Lozada, is a corrections officer in the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department and said he looked up to Lozada for his military service.

"The Mario Lozada that's been portrayed is not the Mario Lozada I know," he said.

Lozada's father, Ramon Lozada, is also a military veteran. The elder Lozada

apologized to Gall for failing to raise his son.

"Somewhere along the line I dropped the ball," the father said. "I don't know where."

Lozada wept as his father spoke.

"I walked in here with Mario Roberto Lozada. Please give me a chance to walk out of here with Mario Roberto Lozada," the father said.

Lozada apologized to his family for failing as a father and husband.

Gall told the elder Lozada that it was not his apology to give, and later directed Lozada to turn around and apologize to his father. Lozada cried as he did, and Lozada's father, who is also a military veteran, saluted him and said he had been a good son.

Lozada told the mothers of his victims that he was sorry for ruining their daughters' lives, and he should have referred them to get treatment. He said he hoped they could get treatment to help them move on from his abuse and lead productive lives.

"They're smart and intelligent girls," he said. "They don't deserve this. You don't deserve this."

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