

## These Kid Rapists Shocked Brazil and Got Stiff Jail Sentences. Guess What

Contributed by Joanne Blaney  
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In August 2003, six City Council members and six businessmen were arrested and later condemned for the corruption of minors, promoting child prostitution, and formation of a criminal gang in Porto Ferreira, São Paulo, in southeastern Brazil.

The Justice System decreed the imprisonment of all 12, including the president of the City Council, Luiz Cezar Lanzoni, who received a prison sentence of 45 years. One businessman José Carlos Terassi, fled the city and continues to be in hiding.

At that time, this case in Porto Ferreira was cited nationally as an example of rigorous investigation of the facts, identification of the suspects, and an operative judicial system. It restored many people's faith in the justice system.

The Paulista Forum that works to prevent violence against women recognized this case as an unusual one in a country where lack of punishment is the norm in cases involving violence against women and young girls.

Testimonies given at the trial by the victims and some of the accused showed that the sexual exploitation of the children and adolescents occurred for more than 2 years at orgies (at least 50) on small farms on the outskirts of the city.

At least 12 girls were involved, all of whom were very poor. Official city cars and motor-taxis picked up the young girls (10-16 years old) two blocks away from their school. (Luiz Gonzaga Borceda, one of the men condemned to 43 years in prison, was the principal of the girls' school).

The "parties" were always on Mondays and began around 10:00 AM and ended in the early evening. The girls received payment of approximately US\$ 12 and were forced to have violent sexual relations with various men. According to the testimony of the girls, many went to the party to get something to eat.

They were also forced to pose nude for photographs. This was affirmed by one of the assistants to the city council who destroyed the photos when the scandal came to light. The girls were given alcohol and crack cocaine during the parties.

In spite of being criminally condemned for crimes such as corruption of minors, rape, drug-trafficking, and the formation of gangs, all but one of the accused are at liberty after spending a short time in prison.

In May, 2006, Borceda, a City Council member and ex-director of the school, was freed after serving two years in prison. In such a small city, it is easy for the condemned "in liberty" to run into the young victims who still suffer the effects of the crimes as well as the humiliation of their aggressors on the street.

The only one of the condemned who has not been freed Luis César Lanzoni the ex-president of the City Council Chambers. (He has currently served two and one-half years of his 47 year sentence).

He ran again for City Council while in prison and was reelected with 846 votes. In that election, Lanzoni received the third highest number of votes gaining his seat with 3% of the valid votes.

At that time, the members of the City Council made a spurious agreement deciding that Lanzoni would assume his mandate as City Council member even while in jail. However, a petition of annulment was filed and the protests of citizens, and the fear of international repercussion stopped the process.

It was decided that the City Council would "bide its time" for Lanzoni to assume office. Now there is a possibility that Lanzoni will be given a type of house arrest with the opportunity to work.

According to the interpretation of the Federal Tribunal, there is a "possibility" of a type of parole or work release for atrocious crimes which allows someone to leave during the day to work.

Lanzoni wants to "assume his office" as soon as he leaves prison. City Council members said that they will vote to give Lanzoni his mandate since the action taken by the Prosecuting Council succeeded in impeding his mandate only while he was in prison.

To assume his political position in the municipal council represents an award for the abuser. It also reinforces the idea that this type of violent crime against young girls is not grave or important.

Even with the support of a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry and the help of Senator Patrícia Sabóya, a majority of the

files of legal processes against political figures have been closed.

For Senator Sabóya, it is fundamental to break the silence that normally accompanies these types of crimes. In her opinion, crimes in which authorities and political leaders participate should have more rigorous punishments because they are practiced by those whose job it is to defend and protect children and adolescents.

Various petitions against the condemned men have been filed by the lawyers for defense of the young girls but it appears that impunity will win again.

Local people and authorities, including the lawyer defending the young girls, are desperate for national and international attention to this case.

To prevent the occurrence of more cases like this, Brazil Justice, a human rights group is urging that letters be sent to the City Council Legislative Assembly of Porto Ferreira asking for the expulsion of Lanzoni as a City Council representative.

They say: "How can he be recognized by the State as a representative of the people and receive a salary from the public coffers after being condemned for such grave crimes committed against young girls? This will only serve to increase sexual violence against girls and adolescents.

"The criminal court in which the condemned were judged did not doubt the veracity of the facts. What Lanzoni and the other 11 condemned men did is a grave offense against the Brazilian Federal Law that protects children and adolescents. Cases like this only reinforce the belief of people that justice is for the "rich and powerful".

The following letter in Portuguese is suggested. It should be sent to the President of the City Council of Porto Ferreira with e-mail copies to:

Mayor of the City - Prefeito Mauricio Sponton Rasi [prefeito@portoferreira.sp.gov.br](mailto:prefeito@portoferreira.sp.gov.br)

State Commission for the Defense of Human Rights - [conselhocondepe@ig.com.br](mailto:conselhocondepe@ig.com.br)

Presidente Gilson Alberto Strozzi  
Câmara Municipal de Porto Ferreira  
Av. Vinte e Quatro de Outubro, 1068  
PORTO FERREIRA - SP CEP 13.660-000  
BRAZIL

20 de junho de 2006

Prezado Presidente Gilson A. Strozzi,

Esta carta trata-se de uma denúncia de exploração sexual e corrupção de menores bem como a promoção de prostituição infantil em Porto Ferreira, São Paulo 2002/2003. A gravidade dos crimes cometidos contra jovens garotas pelos vereadores e comerciantes locais mostra um grande abuso de poder, falta de ética e violação da lei federal que protege crianças e adolescentes.

Este caso recebeu publicidade nacional e internacional por causa de denúncias e mais tarde, como exemplo de rigor, investigação dos fatos, rápida identificação dos suspeitos seguida por um julgamento e sentença.

Quero manifestar minha total indignação e protesto contra a possibilidade de o Sr. Luis César Lanzoni assumir seu mandato como membro da câmara tão logo seja liberto da prisão. Como pode ele representar o povo de Porto Ferreira após ter sido condenado por um crime tão grave?

Como pode a Câmara dar o seu consentimento e aprovação para tal ato? Temo que Porto Ferreira se tornará um exemplo de pouco caso da justiça. Eu exijo que a justiça seja exercida e que Luis César Lanzoni não assuma, em hipótese alguma, nenhum cargo político.

Atenciosamente,

Your name

CC/ Prefeito Mauricio Sponton Rasi: [prefeito@portoferreira.sp.gov.br](mailto:prefeito@portoferreira.sp.gov.br)

Conselho Condepe : [conselhocondepe@ig.com.br](mailto:conselhocondepe@ig.com.br)

English Translation

Presidente Gilson Alberto Strozzi  
Câmara Municipal de Porto Ferreira  
Av. Vinte e Quatro de Outubro, 1068  
PORTO FERREIRA - SP CEP 13.660-000  
BRAZIL

Dear President Gilson A. Strozzi,

This letter is a denouncement of the sexual exploitation and corruption of minors as well as the promotion of child prostitution in Porto Ferreira, São Paulo in 2002-2003. The gravity of the crimes committed against young girls by City Council representatives and local businessmen shows a great abuse of power, a lack of ethics and a violation of the Federal Law that protects children and adolescents.

At the time, this case received national and international publicity because of the denouncements and later as an example of rigorous investigation of the facts, quick identification of the suspects followed by judgment and judicial sentences.

I want to strongly manifest my indignation and protest the possibility of Luis César Lanzoni assuming his mandate as a City Council member if he is released from prison.

How can he represent the people of Porto Ferreira after being condemned for such grave heinous crimes? How can the City Council Chambers give its consent and approval to such an action? I demand that justice be completed and that Luis César Lanzoni not assume any political position.

Brazil Justice Net - [www.braziljusticenet.org](http://www.braziljusticenet.org)