

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL ADDENDUM

CLIENT: Christa Gail Pike

DOB: 3/10/1976

DATE OF ADDENDUM: June 1, 2026

I have been provided with additional records pertinent to my forensic psychological evaluation of Christa Pike dated July 29, 2023. I have summarized the material relevant to my updated conclusions which follow below.

Specifically, I was provided with the following additional records which informed my updated conclusions:

Carrboro NC Police Department Sexual Assault Incident Report Date 01/14/1994
Bates 000001 – 000022

University of NC Chapel Hill – Pike Medical Records from 1994 Rape Date 01/14/1994
Bates 000023 – 000034

Carrboro NC Police Dept Interview of Christa Pike Date 01/14/1994 Bates 000035 - 000035

Summary of Additional Records

I reviewed the written records from the Carrboro North Carolina Police Department and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill emergency department where Christa was taken for examination following being raped. Christa's report to the police and hospital staff was consistent in describing that a man caught her while she was walking to the store, threw her to the ground, and raped her. She reported that she screamed and hit him in the face. A car drove close by; he responded by running away. The hospital records show that Christa, who was only 17 years old, was crying throughout the exam. Hospital staff noted she was "tearful, very upset while telling the story" (Bates 000025) indicated that the young victim had abrasions on her breast and leg, and bruising on her inner thigh close to her genitals and her knee.

The police interview revealed that Christa was distraught and sobbing as she shared what the man had done to her. She was sobbing so hard that she could not be understood at times. This is the type of intense emotional reaction that is common among rape victims.

Furthermore, the bruising and abrasions add detailed information about how rough the rapist was with the young girl.

In my report from 2023, I referred to this rape in three places, as noted below:

First reference:

When Christa was approximately 17 years old, she was assaulted again while walking to the store. A man grabbed her and pulled her into the woods. She fought him with all her strength. Christa recalled, "I was fighting him so hard that he barely got started (raping her)." She hit his head with a rock, which allowed her to get away. (It is notable that she hit this man's head on a rock, which is like what she did to the victim in the incident crime. This brings up the possibility that Christa was unconsciously triggered during the incident with Colleen Slemmer, and lost control of her behavior, in part because she was triggered by the victim, who she experienced as possibly causing her boyfriend to abandon her.) Christa escaped and ran as fast as she could to a friend's house, who then took her to a hospital. The staff collected a rape kit but there was no semen; she had apparently stopped his attack before he had an orgasm. This man was never identified or caught. (p. 17, Brand Forensic Psychological Report)

Second reference:

Consistent with the CTQ and ACE questionnaires, Christa acknowledged that she endured a truly horrendous level of frequent childhood sexual abuse by five different perpetrators (Ernest, Steve and *rapists who attacked her at age 11, 14, and 17*) as well as being physically assaulted by her mother's boyfriend (Danny), maternal grandmother, mother, and her father. (Brand, P. 23 Forensic Psychological Report)

Third reference:

I believe elements of reenacted trauma showed up in Christa's behavior in her late teens. Christa was exposed to the brutal slaughtering and disemboweling of animals when her grandfather babysat her at a slaughterhouse as a preschooler. This exposure to animals being killed and decapitated brings up the possibility that Christa was unconsciously reenacting the bloody scenes she had been exposed to as a little girl during two bloody episodes in her teens. Specifically, Christa lost control of her behavior during the incident that led her to being on death row, as well as when she, in her own estimation, went "too far" in beating up a man who raped her when she was 17. The victim in the instant crimes was beaten and badly bloodied. *Christa used rocks to hit the head of the victim in the instant crimes as well as the man who attacked when she was 17 years*

old. This may have been an unconscious attempt to be in control in both situations where she was threatened. In the episode with the man, he surprised her and began raping her. Only after she hit him in the head did he stop raping her and run away. (Italics added here.) Christa reported to the police that she had tried to get the victim in the instant murder to stop talking to her. Christa was trying to get her to stop calling her the same names one of Christa’s abusers had called her. Christa perceived the victim as a threat to Christa in that she had been harassing her, cutting up photos that were precious to Christa, coming into her room at night while she slept, and threatening to steal Christa’s boyfriend from her. Christa reported telling the victim repeatedly to stop talking, but the girl refused to stop talking. Christa was triggered by this girl’s use of the same slurs as one of her previous abusers, and by the possibility that this girl might cause Tadaryl to abandon her. *All of these situations (slaughterhouse, rape at 17, and instant crime) were bloody scenes in which animals and people were severely injured or killed. (Italics added.)* When triggered and threatened, Christa becomes disorganized in her thinking. Under serious stress, she is unable to reign in control of her behavior, emotions and thinking, as noted in Dr. Wilson’s and Dr. Engum’s testing. This had tragic consequences. (Brand, pp. 27-28 Forensic Psychological Report)

The Account of the Rock Involved in Christa’s Rape at Age 17

In reviewing the additional records provided, I noted a discrepancy between two accounts Christa gave of the rape she suffered at age 17. In my 2023 evaluation, Christa reported that she struck her attacker in the head with a rock, which caused him to stop raping her and flee. However, a report by Dr. Diana McCoy, prepared approximately one year after the instant crimes, documents a somewhat different account: that the man threw Christa down and she hit her head on a rock, and that it was the approach of a car, not Christa’s own action, that frightened him away.

This discrepancy does not indicate deception. It reflects something clinically fundamental about the nature of traumatic memory.

Traumatic memories are not stored or retrieved like ordinary recollections. They are encoded as fragmented sensory and movement memories, such as what the body felt, what the hands did, where the terror was felt, rather than as coherent verbal narratives. As Kearney and Lanius (2024) explain, traumatic memory is neurobiologically distinct from autobiographical memory: it is not deliberately retrieved but involuntarily relived, existing as “unintegrated vestiges of overwhelming events” that re-emerge as present-day sensory and movement fragments of memory rather than as a coherent story one can tell. Critically, these authors note that the legal system’s assumption that traumatic memory can be interrogated by the same standards as ordinary autobiographical memory “is inappropriate at best”, a caution directly relevant here (Kearney & Lanius, 2024).

The narrative a survivor constructs around a traumatic memory changes over time, shaped by psychological development, emotional needs, and the ongoing often unconscious work of survival from horrific events. Research has established that trauma memories are subject to change over time, with the stored memory tending to diverge from the original as a function of ongoing psychological processing (Dekel & Bonanno, 2013). Research on survivors of childhood sexual abuse further documents that, over time, survivors often unconsciously reshape their memories of victimization in ways that allow them to feel less helpless and more in control of what happened to them (Harvey, 2010). For someone who spent her childhood with no power over what was done to her body, this kind of psychological self-protection is not surprising — it is a survival mechanism.

In Christa’s case, the clinical interpretation is straightforward. When she first described this assault to Dr. McCoy approximately one year after the instant crimes, she narrated herself as passive: she was the one struck, she was rescued by the arrival of a car. By the time of my evaluation decades later, her memory had reorganized around an image of herself as someone who fought back — who struck her attacker and forced him to stop. The rock was now in her hand. This is not fabrication. It is what the traumatized mind does across a lifetime of survival — it searches, however imperfectly, for a story that is tolerable.

This detail also deepens the clinical significance of the instant offense. The weapon Christa used in the crime for which she was sentenced to death was not incidental. The rock she used on the victim carries profound symbolic weight in her psychological history. Its use reflects what trauma clinicians recognize as traumatic reenactment — the unconscious repetition of elements from prior traumatic experiences in later behavior (Herman, 1992; Kearney & Lanius, 2024). This is consistent with what I described in my 2023 report. Understanding this does not excuse the offense. It reveals a psychological history of devastation — one that was never adequately presented at trial.

The Anniversary Date Connection Between Christa's Rape and the Instant Crimes

It is quite significant that Christa was violently raped on January 14, 1994, and that one year later, almost to the exact day, she committed the instant crimes on January 12, 1995. The trauma literature describes “anniversary reactions” to trauma which can manifest as heightened emotional distress, intrusive re-experiencing, behavioral dysregulation, and in some cases, unconscious reenactment of trauma-related behavior in the period surrounding the anniversary date (Bruce & Matsuo, 2022; Saltzman, 2019). The proximity of these two dates — separated by less than 48 hours across calendar years — is clinically significant and consistent with the broader pattern of traumatic reenactment described in my 2023 report. It is my opinion that Christa's violent behavior on January 12, 1995 was not only the product of the situational triggers present that night, but was also shaped by two converging vulnerabilities: the psychological weight of the approaching anniversary of her rape — a date her nervous system, if not her conscious mind, had reason to remember — and the irritable bipolar emotionally reactive state she was experiencing on that same day. The co-occurrence of these two factors, each capable

of impairing judgment and behavioral control independently, substantially increases the likelihood that her capacity for self-regulation was severely compromised at the time of the offense.

The Cruelty of the Execution Protocol as Applied to Christa Pike

Torn From Everything Familiar

Approximately 48 hours before her scheduled execution, Christa will be transferred from the women's facility where she has lived for years, her cell, her routines, the staff and peers who constitute her entire world, to Riverbend Maximum Security Institution, a men's prison, where she will be held in a death watch cell until she is killed (Tennessee Department of Correction, 2025). She will spend the final days of her life as a stranger in a strange place, surrounded by men, cut off from every source of human familiarity she has. For a woman with Christa's history, this is not administrative procedure. It is added and severe punishment, one nowhere reflected in her sentence.

Silenced in Her Final Hours

In the 12 hours before her execution, Christa will be prohibited from contact with family, friends, her spiritual minister, or anyone who might offer comfort, with the sole exception of her attorney (Tennessee Department of Correction, 2025). She will face her death alone. For a woman who was abandoned, repeatedly sexually and physically violated, and unprotected throughout her childhood, who spent years in a system that failed to recognize how broken she was when she arrived, the deliberate withdrawal of human connection in her final hours is not neutral. It replicates, with harsh precision, the abandonment she has known her entire life.

Held Down by Men

At 10:00 a.m. on the morning of her execution, a team of male corrections officers will enter Christa's cell, physically remove her, place her on a gurney, and strap her arms and legs down so she cannot move (Tennessee Department of Correction, 2025). Christa was repeatedly held down by men and raped throughout her childhood and adolescence. She was unable to move. She was pinned. She was powerless. What the protocol describes as a routine restraint procedure will, for her, be experienced as a precise replication of the worst moments of her life. The research on traumatic memory makes this unavoidable: traumatic memory is not recalled, it is *relived*, triggered by sensory and physical experiences that mirror the original trauma (Herman, 1992; Kearney & Lanius, 2024). Being physically restrained by a group of men, immobilized and unable to move, will not simply frighten her. It will return her, in full sensory and neurobiological force, to every violation she ever survived. She will die in the grip of her trauma, as she has lived.

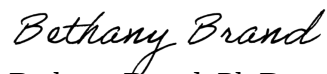
Conclusion

Taken together, the records reviewed in this addendum and the three issues raised above tell a single coherent story. Christa Pike was born into a family with generations of severe emotional and psychiatric problems. Her childhood was filled with watching and experiencing bloody violence. She was sexually violated by five perpetrators throughout her childhood and adolescence. She struggled with unrecognized trauma-related psychiatric disorders. She was never accurately diagnosed, never adequately treated, and never fully understood, not by the people and the system that raised her, and not by the legal process that condemned her.

The discrepancy in her memory of the rape at age 17 is not evidence of dishonesty; it is evidence of how thoroughly that trauma lived in her, and how hard her mind worked across decades to survive it. The rock she used in the instant offense was not random; it was the instrument her memory had transformed into a symbol of survival and control. The execution that now awaits her, the transfer to a men's prison, the isolation, the physical restraint by male officers, will, for this woman with this particular history, constitute a form of suffering that goes far beyond what any sentence requires. She will not simply be put to death. Christa will be returned, in her final hours, to the terror that defined her life. What awaits her is not only death. It is, for Christa, a form of dying that is uniquely and needlessly cruel. And it is avoidable.

The conclusions stated in this report were reached within a reasonable degree of psychological certainty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bethany Brand".

Bethany Brand, Ph.D.

Licensed Psychologist and Professor Emerita

References

- Bruce, M. J., & Matsuo, H. (2022). "Burned into my Brain:" Trauma Anniversary Reactions Examined from a Qualitative Perspective [Article]. *Journal of Loss & Trauma*, 27(8), 717-730. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2022.2079204>
- Dekel, S., & Bonanno, G. A. (2013). Changes in trauma memory and patterns of posttraumatic stress. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 5(1), 26–34. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022750>
- Harvey, M. R. (2010). In the aftermath of sexual abuse: Making and remaking meaning in narratives of trauma and recovery. *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(1), 86–107. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.20.1.06har>
- Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery*. Basic Books.
- Kearney, B. E., & Lanius, R. A. (2024). Why reliving is not remembering and the unique neurobiological representation of traumatic memory. *Nature Mental Health*, 2, 1070–1079. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44220-024-00324-z>
- Saltzman, L. Y. (2019). It's about time: Reconceptualizing the role of time in loss and trauma. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 11(6), 663-670. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000435>
- Tennessee Department of Correction. (2025). *Lethal injection execution protocol*. Tennessee Department of Correction. (Signed January 8, 2025)