

Statement from Stephen Ferrell, Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee, on today's release of the Special Master's report to the Tennessee Supreme Court.

“The Special Master found that Christa Pike suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Bipolar Disorder as a result of the repeated rapes and childhood sexual abuse she experienced at the hands of multiple men.

Neither the State of Tennessee nor the judge disputed the testimony from Christa's licensed clinical psychologist Dr. Bethany Brand that Christa would relive her past traumas under the conditions imposed by Tennessee's protocol. That protocol involves the extraction team physically extracting Christa from her cell, holding her down, and strapping her onto the execution gurney just before they attempt to insert IV lines. Dr. Brand's uncontested testimony was that it is sure or very likely that the State would cause Christa terror and pain due to her Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, involuntarily reliving the worst moments of her life, much like traumatized soldiers when they return from a war zone. Nonetheless, the Special Master rejected her arguments that her execution would violate the Tennessee and U.S. Constitutions.

Just after the hearing, the TDOC's own execution physician, who is known to have participated in the botched Tony Carruthers' execution, publicly declared that he would establish the central line requested due to the compromised condition of Christa's veins. If TDOC does not accommodate the central line request and peripheral access to her veins fails, as it did with Mr. Carruthers, this physician will be the man who facilitates a torturous death. He is not competent to perform this procedure. He has no hospital privileges to do so. The only time in the past 13 years he has attempted to place a central line on Mr. Carruthers, he failed.

The State clearly doesn't care about a girl victim of childhood rapes and sexual abuse, and it will be complicit should Christa's last moments be torturous.”

-Stephen Ferrell, Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee

For more information:

www.mercyforchrista.org

<https://dpw.lawschool.cornell.edu/advocacy/christa-pike/>