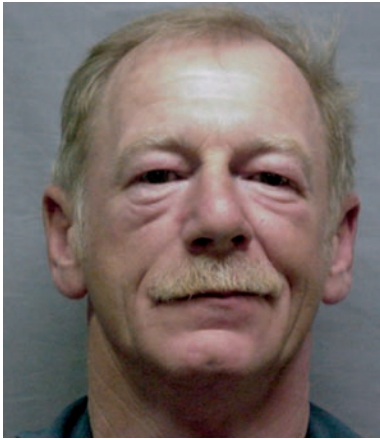


Faces behind the Figures

Are we safer because they're behind bars?



Gabriel Christ, No. 285326

Offense: Criminal sexual conduct,
3rd degree

Sentence: 2 - 15 years

Offense: Assault with intent to
commit great bodily
harm less than murder

Sentence: 1 - 10 years

First Possible Release: Nov. 18, 2000

Although his crime has been described as situational by parole board screeners, and he would be deported to Germany upon release, Gabriel Christ has been turned down for parole six times, apparently because he continues to deny the sexual offense while admitting the assault.

Gabriel Christ, a German citizen living in the United States, was 51 years old when, in October 1998, he came home to Detroit from a six-month stint as a chef on a cruise ship. He and his American wife had been married for nine years but, because of his job, they were apart for half of every year.

Christ's convictions arose from a domestic dispute. Each spouse thought the other was being unfaithful. When his wife said she wanted a divorce, Christ began drinking and became abusive. He admittedly beat his wife and threatened to pour gasoline on her and set her on fire. His wife claimed he also forced her to have intercourse. Christ maintains the sex was consensual. He was convicted at a bench trial of assault with intent to commit great bodily harm less than murder, for which he was sentenced to serve 1-10 years in prison, and third-degree criminal sexual conduct, for which he received a 2-15 year term.

Christ has no prior criminal record and no history of substance abuse, nor were there any prior complaints of domestic violence. The MDOC's own parole guidelines note that this was a situational offense, unlikely to recur, and score Christ as having a high probability of release. He has not received a single misconduct citation while in prison, is now 61 years old and would be immediately deported to Germany.

Nevertheless, the parole board has turned Christ down for parole six times -- four times for 12 months, once for 18 and the most recent for 24 months. Board denials have always been premised on Christ's refusal to admit guilt of the sexual assault. Although he has repeatedly attempted to enter recommended sex offender programming, he has been refused admission because he denies committing a sexual assault.

Now, seven and one-half years past his first parole eligibility date, Christ says: "These continuances of incarceration . . . are senseless and a waste of taxpayers' money. . . I only wish to be returned to Germany now that I have completed my minimum sentence in the state of Michigan."



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