

Faces behind the Figures

Are we safer because they're behind bars?



Terry Clark

Terry Clark, No. 379871

Crime: Assault with intent to commit sexual Penetration

Sentence: 1y, 11 m - 10 yrs

Paroled: January 2005

Parole Revoked: August 2006

Terry Clark had successfully completed 14 months on parole when he was returned to prison for five years for possessing a folding knife with a three-inch blade mounted on what appeared to be a gun stock.

Terry Clark was a high school graduate who served eight years in the Army before being honorably discharged. He was working full time at an oil change place when he was convicted in Jackson County of having sex with a 15-year-old girl. At the time, he was on probation for carrying a concealed weapon and had several misdemeanor convictions involving drug possession and driving violations. Sentenced to a prison term of 1 year, 11 months - 10 years, Clark was paroled in January of 2005 after serving nearly 3 1/2 years.

While on parole, Clark abided by all the rules. He attended sex offender therapy, worked part-time on building maintenance jobs for his uncle and reported regularly to his parole agent.

In April of 2006, about 10 months before his parole supervision was scheduled to end, Clark was stopped by police for driving with an improper license registration plate cover. He volunteered that he was on parole, the nature of the crime and the fact that he thought he had an outstanding warrant for attorney fees he hadn't paid.

When the officer, who characterized Clark as cooperative, searched his automobile he found a knife in the center console of the car. It was a three-inch blade mounted on a gun handle and stored in a holster, making it initially appear to be a gun. It was lying with a screw driver and screws. Clark explained that he had just installed a car radio and used the knife, which he had purchased at a pawn shop for \$4, to strip wires.

Clark was charged with carrying a concealed weapon. He plead guilty to the reduced charge of possessing a switchblade and was sentenced to serve 60 days in jail.

After Clark finished his jail term, the parole board revoked his parole. Though the parole agent said that he may have approved the possession of a knife for construction work, he said he would not have approved one that looked like Clark's.

Under the Department of Corrections' "zero gun tolerance" policy for parolees, Clark will not be



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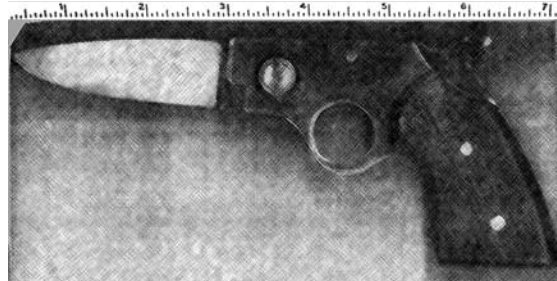
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The policy was enacted in 2004 at the direction of Gov. Jennifer Granholm to reduce gun violence, particularly in Detroit. Parolees who possess guns or knowingly associate with others who possess guns automatically have their parole revoked for five years or until they have served their maximum sentence, whichever comes first.

The parole board's discretion to depart from the policy is rarely exercised. A firearm is considered to be any weapon capable of firing a missile of any type, including BB shot, and includes an imitation firearm or a simulation of a firearm. Thus, although Clark in fact possessed a knife, not a gun, the five-year policy was applied to him because the knife had the handle of a gun. Parolees who possess actual guns are also be referred to state or federal authorities for possible criminal prosecution.



Clark's original offense involved no weapon. The knife for which his parole was revoked was never used to threaten or harm anyone. But, like many of the several hundred parolees returned to prison so far under the "zero gun tolerance" policy, Clark will now serve more time for his parole revocation than he did for his crime.