



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety

Parole Board

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

MICHAEL MARPLE

W41130

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing
DATE OF HEARING: August 9, 2011
DATE OF DECISION: September 14, 2012

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Cesar Archilla, John Bocon, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Ina Howard-Hogan, Roger Michel, Lucy Soto-Abbe, Josh Wall

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Parole is denied with a review in five years. The decision is unanimous.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Michael Marple, at age 30, beat and choked fellow inmate John Blais on April 13, 1984 while they were incarcerated at MCI-Cedar Junction in Walpole. Marple and Stephen Haynes attacked Mr. Blais on a stairwell landing, strangling and beating him in the head with a pipe. The medical examiner determined that death resulted from asphyxia due to strangulation by ligature. The body was found with a ligature around the neck, laceration of the chin, and multiple contusions of the face and scalp.

In April 1986, a trial jury convicted Marple of second-degree murder. During the trial, co-defendant, Stephen Haynes pleaded guilty to manslaughter. Marple unsuccessfully appealed his conviction. He filed a motion for new trial in 1995 and two motions for new trial in 2010. All three motions were denied.

Marple's criminal history began at age 13 in Connecticut resulting in his commitment to a reformatory. His criminal conduct continued into adulthood, including convictions for larceny, burglary, aggravated assault, and breaking and entering. For this criminal conduct, Marple was incarcerated several times. In June 1980 while an inmate at the Connecticut Correctional Institute in Somers, Marple assaulted a correctional officer and was identified as a threat to

security which resulted in his transfer to the custody of the Massachusetts Department of Correction. Within four years of the transfer, Marple and Stephen Haynes murdered John Blais.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON AUGUST 9, 2011

During his August 2011 hearing Marple was questioned about his institutional adjustment and his several different versions of the murder of John Blais. Marple's institutional adjustment from 1984 to 2002 was poor; he received 53 disciplinary reports, and had minimal program participation. Marple was a terrible inmate for two decades. He threatened staff, disrupted activities, fought with other inmates, used marijuana and home brew, possessed weapons, and smeared feces on walls. His record shows a long and persistent pattern of anti-social behavior. Board Members acknowledged Marple's improved conduct since his last hearing in 2006. Marple has not received any new disciplinary reports and participates in institutional programs to address his issues of substance abuse and the causative factors of his criminal behavior.

While it does appear that Marple is making positive strides in his institutional behavior, he continues to minimize his involvement in Mr. Blais' murder. Marple has relayed various versions of the crime and despite the evidence presented at trial, informed the Board that he did not hit Mr. Blais stating, "I just stood in the doorway as a lookout." During Marple's hearing, speaking in oppositions to parole, Norfolk Assistant District Attorney Marguerite Grant pointed out that "in repeated motions for a new trial, Marple has sought to minimize his involvement in the murder and blame his trial attorney for his predicament."

III. DECISION

Considering Mr. Marple's criminal history, institutional adjustment, substance abuse issues, history of violent behavior, and lack credibility in describing his role in Mr. Blais' murder, the Board concludes that Mr. Marple is not rehabilitated and continues to present a risk of violence. It is the unanimous opinion of the Board that Mr. Marple's release is incompatible with the welfare of society and that it is reasonably probable that he will re-offend if released on parole. Accordingly, parole is denied.

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing.


Caitlin E. Casey, Chief of Staff


Date