



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

CARL STROMSNES

W63544

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: June 2, 2011

DATE OF DECISION: May 21, 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. The next hearing will be in five years. The decision is unanimous.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Carl Stromsnes murdered his brother, Eric Stromsnes, at a family residence in Chelsea on June 28, 1995. Carl Stromsnes was 41 years old and Eric was 33. Eric had mental and physical disabilities. Eric walked up from his room in the basement and saw Carl Stromsnes ransacking the house looking for jewelry and other items he could steal from his family members to use to support his drug habit.

Carl brutally murdered his younger brother with no regard for the filial connection or the disabilities of the victim. He strangled Eric with a phone cord and inflicted 30 separate puncture and blunt force wounds. Near Eric's body, police found knives, a hammer, and a broken file. Eric's wallet was open on the table. There were blood spatters and smears throughout the kitchen, on the walls, cabinets and ceiling. The cause of death was "strangulation in the setting of multiple blunt and penetrating injuries."

After beating his brother with a hammer, stabbing him with a knife, and strangling him with a phone cord, Carl Stromsnes left the house with a duffel bag of stolen items and his bloody clothes, and went to a bar to continue drinking and looking to buy more drugs.

Carl Stromsnes pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and armed robbery on November 3, 1997. He received a life sentence, with 10 to 12 years concurrent for the armed robbery.

His criminal history begins at age 12; he had multiple juvenile arraignments for larceny and breaking and entering. As an adult, he had many convictions, including five convictions for breaking and entering and a burglary conviction. This is his seventh sentence resulting in incarceration. He escaped twice from Deer Island, in 1976 and 1988.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON JUNE 2, 2011

This is the inmate's first parole hearing. He postponed the hearing for one year because he was receiving treatment at Bridgewater State Hospital in 2010. Stromsnes made several statements during that treatment that are relevant to his parole petition. Those statements have been documented as follows: "If I met with the Parole Board right now, I'd tell them 'don't let me out;' I don't care about parole; it would be the biggest mistake in the world for the Parole Board to let me out; my head is broke; I haven't even dealt with what I did; I feel like I am getting strangled every time I try to talk about it." He was unable or unwilling to discuss his crime with therapists at Bridgewater. Bridgewater State Hospital recommended psychiatric treatment because the inmate "posed a risk of harm to himself and others" and concluded "it is highly likely Mr. Stromsnes will be assaultive in the future." He was diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder, and was kept at Bridgewater for six months. He is in the early stages of treatment; he takes two medications as part of the treatment. He stated, "Recently I am talking to a psychiatrist; for years I didn't want to deal with it; I just shut down so I didn't have to deal with it."

At the hearing, the inmate acknowledged that his brother had a serious mental disability and a physical disability that caused him to walk with a limp. The inmate admitted that Eric caught him ransacking the family residence. Eric, wearing a Mickey Mouse shirt, told him "stop it; I will call the police." The inmate stated that he used tools to hit Eric 8 to 10 times and stabbed him twice with a knife; he said he did not remember using the phone cord. The inmate claimed that Eric threw the first punch; that seems very unlikely but is irrelevant given the circumstances. Board members noted that the inmate's recollection of his conduct does not explain the 61 injuries sustained by Eric. The inmate admitted he went to a bar after the murder and tried to sell the jewelry he had stolen. He left his bloody clothes in the bar's bathroom.

The inmate has 11 disciplinary reports. Most concerning are disciplinary reports for fighting in 2004, 2006, and 2010. He gave explanations for the fights. In 2004, he threw punches at an inmate who taunted him. In 2006, "I initiated this fight" after another inmate bumped into him. He said, "I felt nothing; I just wanted to kill him; I

have to salvage whatever humanity I have left; prison makes you feel sometimes not like a human being; that's the way I felt then and I still feel sometimes." The disciplinary report records that Stromsnes was seen punching and kicking the inmate. In 2010, Stromsnes says the other inmate cut the food line and threw the first punch. The disciplinary report records that Stromsnes struck the inmate several times and then kicked him several times in the face after he fell to the ground. Stromsnes has participated in several rehabilitative programs.

No one appeared in support of parole. Several family members spoke or wrote letters in opposition to parole. They described Eric as "an angel with a heart of gold; a gentle soul; a man with an eight year old's mind and heart; a person everyone loved; he was everything to us." One relative submitted a letter expressing that family members would be afraid to have Carl out of prison. Another family member wrote that Carl was jealous of Eric and that "jealousy turned to hate." She wondered how Carl "could not love his own brother like the rest of the world did." Suffolk Assistant District Attorney Charles Bartoloni spoke in opposition to parole.

III. DECISION

Carl Stromsnes committed a horrific murder of his innocent brother in a manner demonstrating extreme degrees of jealousy, hate, and explosive rage that are nearly impossible to comprehend or explain. As the inmate stated in 2010, "It would be the biggest mistake in the world for the Parole Board to let me out." The inmate would be likely to re-offend if released. He remains dangerous, thus his release is not compatible with the welfare of society. His parole is denied with a review in five years.

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



Josh Wall, Chairman



Date