



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**STEVEN ARCHER**

**W50732**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Revocation Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** September 27, 2011

**DATE OF DECISION:** April 19, 2013<sup>1</sup>

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

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, criminal record, institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in writing, we conclude by unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole at this time. Parole is denied with a review in five years. The next hearing will take place in September of 2016.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

Stephen Archer appeared before the Parole Board on September 27, 2011, as a parole violator for a revocation review hearing. He was paroled on July 1, 2009, and was returned to custody on October 7, 2010, when he received a parole violation for irresponsible conduct and for associating with a person with a criminal record.

Somewhere between the evening of August 17 and the early morning of August 18, 1990, Mr. Archer murdered his two-and-a-half month old son, Alexander. The cause of death was blunt force trauma to the head that caused Alexander to stop breathing. Mr. Archer pleaded guilty to second degree murder and was sentenced to serve life in prison.

<sup>1</sup> This decision was delayed because it had been assigned to an employee who left the agency without completing the decision. The Parole Board regrets the uncertainty and inconvenience that this delay caused to those involved.

On the night of the murder, Mr. Archer had used cocaine at home. Shortly thereafter, Alexander started crying and Mr. Archer could not quiet him. Instead, Mr. Archer struck Alexander in the head with his fist multiple times. During this time, Alexander's mother, Sandra, was passed out on the couch after having taken Tylenol with codeine and drinking vodka.

At 3:40 a.m. on August 18, Mr. Archer calmly carried Alexander into a hospital in Lowell where he told the admitting nurse that the baby had fallen out of the crib. Despite numerous efforts, medical staff was unable to resuscitate Alexander. At the time he was taken to the hospital, Alexander had bruises on the left front of his head and behind his left ear. He also had two scrapes on his nose, an abrasion on his right eye, three small bruises on his right front temple, and clear fluid coming from his left ear. Finally, there were bruises fitting the pattern of adult fingertips on the back of his head, along with a longitudinal skull fracture.

In the weeks prior to the murder, Department of Social Service workers and visiting nurses had noticed injuries to the baby, including a possible cigarette burn on the bottom of Alexander's foot, a bruise on his ear, and an abrasion on his nose.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2011**

Steven Archer seeks re-parole after a violation that involved lying to his parole officer about a relationship with a woman who had a criminal record. He told the Board that "I have reflected on my actions and I have learned my lessons." Board Members expressed concern about Mr. Archer's dishonesty with his parole officer. One Board Member told Mr. Archer that "I am flabbergasted by your conduct of deceit." A Board Member noted how elaborate the deceptions were, including hiding the girlfriend in a bedroom when the parole officer visited the home, and enlisting his mother in lying to the parole officer.

Mr. Archer seeks re-parole to his mother's house in Mashpee. She was the only person to speak in support of parole at the hearing. His mother was part of the deceptive living arrangements involving the girlfriend. Mr. Archer was not employed on parole; he received disability benefits due to a back condition.

There was evidence that he used alcohol on parole, to which Mr. Archer told his parole officer that "I took one sip of beer." A Board Member told Mr. Archer that "I do not believe this is all you did." Board Members also noted that Mr. Archer's explanation of how he struck the infant does not explain all of the injuries received by the victim, including numerous injuries to the face and head. Mr. Archer admitted that the injury to the baby's foot resulted from a cigarette burn. He provided the implausible explanation that he was smoking near the baby when the baby kicked the cigarette. Mr. Archer denied any intentional conduct associated with the burn.

Middlesex Assistant District Attorney Adrienne Lynch spoke in opposition to parole. She described other times when Mr. Archer and his relatives tried to manipulate the system through dishonesty, including deceiving the Department of Social Services about where the victim lived in the months leading up to the murder and filing evidently false affidavits to support Mr. Archer's motion to withdraw his guilty plea.

### III. DECISION

Steven Archer received parole after murdering his two-month-old son and serving 18 years of a life sentence. While on parole, he perpetrated an elaborate fraud on his parole officer, for several months, in order to hide an inappropriate romantic relationship with a woman who had a criminal record and substance abuse issues. This continues a pattern of deception that Mr. Archer has shown throughout his adult life. This degree of deceitful thinking, planning, and conduct establishes that Mr. Archer is not rehabilitated. Because he is not rehabilitated, Mr. Archer is likely to re-offend if released and his release is not compatible with the welfare of society. Accordingly, parole is denied. The review will be in five years, during which time Mr. Archer should address the issues related to his pattern of deceitful conduct and consider a parole plan that does not rely on his mother (who has participated in and enabled much of his dishonesty through the years).

*I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.*

Josh Wall  
Josh Wall, Chairman

April 19 2013  
Date