



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD
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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

SHAWN COLLINS

W43227

TYPE OF HEARING: Revocation Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: September 13, 2011

DATE OF DECISION: April 19, 2013¹

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 be in September of 2016.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On September 13, 2011, Shawn Collins appeared before the Parole Board as a parole violator for a revocation review hearing. Mr. Collins was paroled on May 6, 2004, to a residential treatment program, but was returned to custody following parole violations that included: smoking crack cocaine and marijuana; irresponsible conduct for being involved in a fist fight and failing to report to his parole officer as directed; and associating with a person known to have a criminal history. As a result of these violations, parole was revoked.

On August 26, 1985, Mr. Collins murdered his three-month-old son, Terri, in Brockton. The cause of Terri's death was cerebral edema caused by massive head trauma. After a jury

¹ 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.

trial in 1987, Mr. Collins was convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to serve life in prison.

On the day of the murder, Mr. Collins was alone watching Terri while the baby's mother, Kathleen, was food shopping. He had been drinking, became upset because Terri would not stop crying, and inflicted multiple injuries on the child, including violently shaking him. Mr. Collins called 911 and, when first responders arrived at the house, Mr. Collins told them that the baby had stopped breathing, and that he had done so the week before. Emergency personnel transported Terri to Brockton Hospital. Terri was eventually transported to Boston's Children's Hospital due to the severity of his injuries, and was pronounced dead on August 27. The autopsy report indicated that Terri had suffered numerous injuries, including a leg fracture, an arm fracture, bruises on the forehead, bruises around the eyes, bruises on the left and right buttocks, and bruises on the back. The ultimate cause of death was severe head trauma.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

Shawn Collins murdered his three-month-old son and served 18 years of his life sentence before receiving a positive parole vote. He was released on parole in May 2004 and violated on January 15, 2006 for several violations, including smoking crack cocaine and marijuana, deceiving his parole officer, and being involved with his girlfriend who had a criminal record and was active drug user. Concerning these violations, Mr. Collins said, "I was in a relationship I had no business being in, I couldn't get out of the relationship, and that led me to using again."

In describing the murder of his infant son, Mr. Collins admitted that he shook his son because he was crying a lot. Board Members noted that Mr. Collins is hiding some of his other angry conduct that injured the baby because the autopsy documented a leg fracture, an arm fracture, bruises on the forehead, bruises around the eyes, bruises on the left and right buttocks, and bruises on the back.

There were no supporters of parole in attendance. Plymouth Assistant District Attorney Karen O'Sullivan testified in opposition to parole.

III. DECISION

Within twenty months of being paroled, Shawn Collins had violated his parole conditions by misleading his parole officer, choosing a girlfriend with a criminal record and a substance abuse problem, and using crack cocaine. Board Members did not accept his minimization of his drug use on parole. Mr. Collins demonstrated on parole that he did not take parole conditions seriously, was not trustworthy, and was not suitable for community supervision. In short, he is not rehabilitated. At this hearing, he did not show additional insight or reform. Several Board Members noted that he "has more work to do," as he has not recognized issues of control, anger, violence, and failure to take personal responsibility for his conduct.

The standard we apply in assessing candidates for parole is set out in 120 C.M.R. 300.04, which provides that, "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not

incompatible with the welfare of society." Applying that appropriately high standard here, the Board finds that Mr. Collins is not a suitable candidate for parole. Accordingly, parole is denied.

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