



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

**PAMELA OSL
F36178**

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing after Revocation

DATE OF HEARING: May 1, 2012

DATE OF DECISION: January 24, 2013

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

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Re-parole to a long-term residential program after 12 months in lower security at the Department of Correction. The remainder of the time at the Department of Correction must be completed without disciplinary incident and in compliance with all Department of Correction recommendations for rehabilitation programs and activities. The decision is unanimous.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On September 13, 1994 Ms. Osl pleaded guilty in Hampden Superior Court to the second degree murder of Reginald Laraway, age 63.

In the early morning hours of March 9, 1994, Ms. Osl accompanied Mr. Laraway to the Motel 6 in Chicopee, Massachusetts after a night of drinking at a local establishment. Ms. Osl had also consumed crack cocaine during course of the evening. They were alone in the motel room when Pamela Osl, for reasons known only to her, murdered Reginald Laraway by bashing his head several times with the toilet tank cover and slicing his throat using a razor blade. She fled in the victim's car, obtained and used more crack cocaine, socialized with several people, and admitted to one person that she "killed a man while he was asleep." She returned to the motel room to take money and clean the crime scene while the body of Mr. Laraway was still in the room.

Ms. Osl successfully concealed the murder of Mr. Laraway until March 10, 1994, when the manager of the motel contacted the Chicopee Police Department to report a possible dead body. Ms. Osl admitted the murder to police when interviewed on March 10, 1994. In that statement and at subsequent parole hearings she provided her version of events leading up to the murder. She described her own heavy use of alcohol and crack cocaine, her reluctance to agree to the victim's sexual advances, and her panicked, drug-crazed, violent response. She acknowledged that Mr. Laraway's invitations for sexual activity did not include threats or coercion. She admitted that she beat him to unconsciousness and then slit his throat with the razor blade she had used to cut up her cocaine.

The autopsy determined that the victim had succumbed to blunt force trauma and sharp force injuries to the head and neck.

II. PAROLE HISTORY

Pamela Osl appeared before the Massachusetts Parole Board for her initial hearing on January 27, 2009, after which she was granted parole.

In its 2009 decision, the Parole Board stated that "Ms. Osl appears to be utilizing all available resources to foster her rehabilitation and turn her life around. She has made progress through programming to address her criminal thinking, substance abuse, and mental health issues. She takes responsibility for Mr. Laraway's murder, is truthful as to the circumstances, and is remorseful. She readily admits that she was addicted to crack cocaine and abused alcohol. She has invested in treatment programs and has a positive attitude about her ongoing treatment needs. Finally, Ms. Osl has strong family and community support and a solid parole plan. She appears eager to utilize all of the resources available to her to make her transition into the community a success."

Ms. Osl was released to parole supervision on May 27, 2009, to participate in long-term residential programming with the Moving Ahead Program (MAP) in Boston with sober housing at Women in Recovery in East Boston.

On September 6, 2009, Ms. Osl was terminated from Women in Recovery after she admitted to having consumed two jello shots containing alcohol. Ms. Osl was allowed to continue on parole without a revocation. On September 8, 2009, Ms. Osl was granted a bed at the Ocean Spray program in Winthrop and was referred to St. Francis House for mental health counseling. When asked to submit to a random drug test on September 27, 2009, she admitted to having snorted heroin earlier in the week and was subsequently terminated from the program. As she was being detained on a parole violation warrant by the Winthrop Police Department pending transport to MCI-Framingham, Ms. Osl used a razor blade to cut her forearm, which required hospital treatment.

The Parole Board revoked parole and on May 4, 2010, Ms. Osl participated in a Review Hearing, after which re-parole was denied. In its 2010 decision, the Parole Board stated that while it "acknowledges her positive institutional programming and continued strides towards rehabilitation, the Board does have concern with her adjustment on parole, her relapses and her mental health issues. Four months into her parole Ms. Osl was terminated from two separate sober houses for both alcohol and heroin use and her inconsistent versions regarding her self-inflicted injuries are troubling. While Ms. Osl was taking steps to address these concerns, the Board felt she would benefit from continued programming and counseling." A review was set for two years.

III. INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

Ms. Osl has received 17 disciplinary reports during her incarceration, the last of which occurred in 2003. She has maintained employment, participated in education classes, and has been program-involved throughout her incarceration.

Since her return to custody as a parole violator in 2009, Ms. Osl attends AA meetings, and has completed several programs including Domestic Violence Reduction, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Group, Women's Recovery Academy, and Healthy Relationships. In addition, she has received a diploma from the Stratford Career Institute for Administrative Assistant/Secretary and successfully completed the Serv-Safe program. For the past five years, she has participated in the NEADS Puppy Program, which trains service dogs. She has trained two dogs and is in the process of training a third. She continues to take classes at Boston University and is a member of Alpha Lambda, an honors organization at the university.

Ms. Osl's 2010 mental health records document previous diagnoses of PTSD and bipolar disorder. She has recurrent depression and chronic anxiety. She has taken Wellbutrin, Celexa, Lamictal, and Clonidine. As of May 2011, she discontinued her mental health medication and currently meets with a mental health counselor twice a month.

Ms. Osl has had 2 suicide attempts while incarcerated, resulting in two stays of 30 days each at Worcester State Hospital in 1996 and Taunton State Hospital in 2002.

IV. PAROLE HEARING ON MAY 1, 2012

Pamela Osl seeks re-parole to a long term residential program, specifically the Edwina Martin House located in Brockton or the Hello House in Boston. These intensive programs are designed to support women in their rehabilitation and re-integration. Ms. Osl would continue to participate in mental health counseling, AA, and utilize her AA sponsor in the community.

Ms. Osl stated that she has worked hard to change those of her behaviors that continually hurt people. She said that she decided in 2003 to "change my life and try to do the right thing." She also indicated that her initial parole plan was not conducive to support her sobriety and successful re-entry. She admits, in hindsight, that she was not fully prepared for release and would need a more structured environment if she was to be released on parole supervision. She said that the Women in Recovery program helped her with substance abuse issues, coping skills, and anger management. She believes that her work during re-incarceration has helped her to prepare for life in the community.

Ms. Osl was represented by Attorney Neil Hourihan. He also presented an opening statement describing Ms. Osl's recent parole: she was on parole for 123 days and she maintained her sobriety for the first 100 days; she was forthright with her parole officer when she initially relapsed; and she was released in May of 2009 and could not secure mental health services until September 2009.

Ms. Osl appeared to be remorseful throughout her presentment, as she provided a detailed account of her crime and the path that she has taken in her rehabilitation. She also reflected on her mental health issues and alcohol abuse. She said that she had worked closely with a therapist and is not currently on any medication. She said that her most recent mental health diagnosis includes PTSD but not bipolar disorder. Ms. Osl reports a strong support system of family and friends, although Board Members noted that her family was a source of stress and provided little meaningful support during her short parole.

Reginald Laraway's son and daughter testified in opposition to parole, as did Hampden Assistant District Attorney Dianne Dillon. Pamela Osl's daughter and three of Ms. Osl's friends spoke in support of parole.

V. DECISION

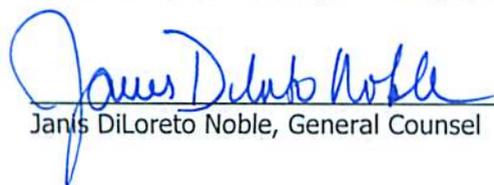
Pamela Osl worked steadily towards rehabilitation during her first incarceration on this sentence. She was especially effective in reducing her capacity for violence. As a result, she received parole in 2009. That parole went poorly as she quickly relapsed with alcohol and heroin. During her re-incarceration Ms. Osl has continued her commitment to rehabilitation. She remains a low risk for violence. Moreover, she has specifically addressed substance abuse issues through the Women's Recovery Academy, AA, and counseling. This period of accountability after a parole violation will increase the likelihood of sobriety and successful re-integration.

The standard applied in assessing candidates for parole is set out in 120 CMR 300.04, which provides that "[p]arole 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, the Board in a unanimous decision has determined that Ms. Osl is a suitable candidate for re-parole to a long-term residential program after 12 months in lower security at the Department of Correction. The remainder of the time at the Department of Correction must be completed without disciplinary incident and in compliance with all Department of Correction recommendations for rehabilitation programs and activities.

Ms. Osl described a need for structure to assist her with her transition. This plan involving pre-release incarceration, long-term residential treatment, and GPS monitoring will give as much structure as can be provided. Ms. Osl needs to understand, however, that she is responsible for her own choices and conduct, and another parole failure might indicate that she is not currently capable of handling the stress and choices that exist outside of the institution.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Re-parole to long-term residential program after 12 months in lower security at the Department of Correction; no drug use; no alcohol use; one-on-one counseling (to address mental health and addiction issues); AA or NA three times per week with sponsor; GPS monitoring for two years (then at discretion or parole officer); no contact with victim's family.

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.


Janis DiLoreto Noble, General Counsel

1/24/13
Date