



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**CHRIS SCOTT  
W35205**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** December 18, 2012

**DATE OF DECISION:** April 25, 2013

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Cesar Archilla, Sheila Dupre, 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, institutional record, the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the board, we conclude by a unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole at this time. Parole is denied with a review in five years.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On April 30, 1975, Chris Scott, Hezekiah Brunson, and a third man, Albert Fernandez, went to Mr. Scott's apartment around 4:30 a.m. after a night of drinking. While in the apartment, Mr. Scott and Mr. Brunson began arguing. The argument escalated, and Mr. Scott's wife Darlene Scott woke up and went into the living room, where she witnessed Mr. Scott stabbing Mr. Brunson repeatedly. After Mr. Brunson was clearly dead from the stab wounds, Mr. Scott insisted that Ms. Scott and Mr. Fernandez help clean and remove evidence from the apartment. Mr. Scott and Mr. Fernandez carried the body of Mr. Brunson to a vacant basement apartment. Mr. Scott then went to Mr. Brunson's apartment to see if there was anything of value in his residence.

Mr. Brunson's body was discovered by a property superintendent for the Greater Boston Redevelopment Authority at approximately 11:30 a.m. Mr. Scott cooperated with authorities and Mr. Scott pleaded guilty to second-degree murder. Mr. Scott received a life sentence for the murder, and concurrent sentences of 10-20 years for armed robbery and armed assault with intent to rob.

Mr. Scott escaped from the Bay State Correctional Center on September 29, 1985, while on furlough. He went to Arizona to reunite with an ex-girlfriend and his daughter. He assumed a fake identity. While in Arizona he got into an altercation with a man who allegedly called him a racial slur. He beat the man with his fists and a broom stick handle. The man died of injuries inflicted by Mr. Scott. After he was caught by authorities and his identity was revealed, he was found guilty of second-degree murder and was sentenced to a term of 20 years. This sentence was to run concurrently with his Massachusetts life sentence. Mr. Scott was returned to Massachusetts in August of 1987. The Arizona murder sentence expired in 2007. He was later sentenced to an additional 1-3 years for the escape charge.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON DECEMBER 18, 2012**

Mr. Scott acknowledged that he has a lengthy and serious criminal history. He attributes his criminal behavior to being a "very angry and misguided kid," who began abusing drugs and alcohol at a very young age. The Board questioned Mr. Scott extensively regarding his violent criminal history. Mr. Scott does not dispute any of his convictions, but describes his role in many of his violent offenses as being a misunderstood individual who was essentially caught in unavoidable predicaments.

Mr. Scott was charged with murder in 1967, and was found not guilty at trial. He reported that his friend stole a purse from an elderly woman. His friend reportedly hit the victim in the head during the robbery and she fell on the sidewalk. The victim died from her injuries stemming from the fall. Mr. Scott stated that he witnessed the robbery as he was talking to a female friend nearby. He stated that he ran after seeing what had happened, and later was given money from the victim's purse. Mr. Scott described the reasons for his conviction as having accepting the money and witnessing the crime, which implicated him as part of the offense. Mr. Scott was convicted of unarmed robbery and was sentenced to 8-10 years. He was paroled from this sentence in 1972.

While on that parole for robbery, Mr. Scott committed multiple armed robberies. Mr. Scott does not deny the offenses and attributes these offenses to his lifestyle of drug abuse. He stated that his life was "out of control" and he had no idea how to live a productive and substance free lifestyle. Concerning the murder of Hezekiah Brunson for which he is currently incarcerated, Mr. Scott stated that he was trying to act as a "peacemaker" that evening. Mr. Scott stated that his wife and Mr. Brunson had been feuding over alleged insulting comments that Ms. Scott presumably directed toward Mr. Brunson. Mr. Scott stated that he knew that it was a misunderstanding and felt the best resolution was to invite Mr. Brunson to their apartment to talk the matter through with his wife. Mr. Scott described the events that followed as a continuation of the dispute between Mr. Brunson and his wife, which he was unable to de-escalate. Mr. Scott stated that while under the influence of alcohol and heroin, he did make the fatal decision of grabbing a knife and stabbing Mr. Brunson during a physical altercation between him and Mr. Brunson. Mr. Scott had no intention that evening of killing Mr. Brunson, and expressed his remorse for having made the decision to stab him.

Mr. Scott described his decision to escape while on furlough as an ongoing internal conflict he struggled with between remaining with his wife and children, and finding his ex-girlfriend and daughter in Arizona to address unresolved feelings. Mr. Scott admits to planning his escape and establishing a new identity in Arizona. While there, Mr. Scott again found himself in a situation that would end with a loss of life at his hands. He described this incident as being the victim of a racial slur while attending a gathering. Mr. Scott stated this precipitated a physical altercation and that is when Mr. Scott grabbed the end of a broom stick handle and started to beat the man. Mr. Scott stated that after he realized how injured the victim was, he and another individual drove the man around to find him medical attention. When they were unable to find an open clinic, Mr. Scott stated that the driver insisted he would drive him to the nearest open hospital. At that point Mr. Scott stated that he left the vehicle, and assumed that the victim would be treated at a hospital. The victim died of his injuries and Mr. Scott was later arrested and charged with murder.

Since his incarceration, Mr. Scott stated that he has since regained the support and trust of his wife, his children and other family members. He stated that he has invested in rehabilitation and has incurred a minimal amount of disciplinary reports. His disciplinary reports have included substance abuse, violence, threatening to inflict bodily harm on an officer and encouraging a group demonstration. All of these incidents occurred in the mid 1980's. He has not had any disciplinary reports for 8 years. Mr. Scott has completed numerous programs since his incarceration and has gained occupational skills in welding.

Mr. Scott reported that he has been fully rehabilitated and is no longer a danger to society. He attributes his programming in prison, support of his family, and dedication to Buddhism as the primary sources of his gaining insight into his criminal history and his sources of change. Mr. Scott's wife and sister testified in support of his release. Suffolk Assistant District Attorney Charles Bartoloni submitted a letter opposing parole.

### **III. DECISION**

Mr. Scott is 63 years old and he has been incarcerated for his current offense for over 36 years. Mr. Scott's criminal history is one that is long and violent. Mr. Scott has been convicted of two murders and was also convicted of a robbery which resulted in a murdered victim. After being incarcerated for his governing offense of second-degree murder, he escaped in 1985 while on furlough and was convicted of another murder in the state of Arizona. He was returned to Massachusetts in 1987 to resume his life sentence.

Although Mr. Scott's institutional adjustment since being returned to Massachusetts has been largely without incident, and he has engaged in rehabilitation and occupational services, Mr. Scott's lengthy and violent history is of primary concern. Mr. Scott was given the privilege of a furlough into the community in 1985. He not only abused this privilege, but while on escape, he committed the ultimate act of violence for the second time. Although he does not deny committing the murders, Mr. Scott continues to describe his role in each murder as a non-violent individual who was placed in the unfortunate situations whereby he used unintended lethal force. Therefore, there remains a question as to Mr. Scott's level of insight and understanding of his state of mind, level of anger, and appreciation for his actions.

Mr. Scott has been engaged in a lifetime of crime, including the most violent offenses. He has been institutionalized for the majority of his adult life. Although he has been able to adjust to a life of incarceration, Mr. Scott has been a risk to public safety while in the community. His poor insight concerning his own actions, intentions, and violence in committing two murders signals a lack of rehabilitation. The standard applied 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, due to his history of extraordinary violence and insufficient rehabilitation, the Parole Board concludes that Mr. Scott is not currently suitable for parole. It is the unanimous decision of the Parole Board to deny Mr. Scott's parole 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. Pursuant to G.L. c. 127, § 130, I further certify that all voting Board Members have reviewed the applicant's entire criminal record. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.*



Janis DiLoreto Noble, General Counsel

4/25/13

Date