



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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Kevin Keefe
Executive Director

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

ABDULLAH SABREE

(Formerly known as William Johnson)

W35096

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: November 18, 2021

DATE OF DECISION: April 20, 2022

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa¹

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On July 31, 1975, in Suffolk Superior Court, Abdullah Sabree (formerly known as William Johnson) was convicted of the first-degree murder of Hakim Jamal and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. The sentence was later commuted by Governor Michael Dukakis on March 25, 1987 to a term of 21 years and 6 weeks to life.

Mr. Sabree appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on November 18, 2021 and was represented Northeastern School of Law students Julie Aaron and Kenny Nelson. Mr. Sabree's parole history includes multiple prior releases, all of which resulted in his return to custody for parole violations. The entire video recording of Mr. Sabree's November 18, 2021 hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of 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 written submissions to the Board, we conclude by unanimous vote that the inmate is a suitable candidate for parole. Reserve to a Veteran Affairs (VA) Residential Treatment program. Mr. Sabree has been re-incarcerated for approximately 24 years after prior parole failures. He declined to appear before the Board until 2016. On May 1,

¹ Chair Moroney recused.

1973, Mr. Sabree participated in the shooting death of Hakim Jamal. Since his return to custody, it has become increasingly evident that Mr. Sabree suffers from severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). His symptoms of PTSD have compromised his ability to engage in specific programs. Given his severe symptoms of PTSD, programs that are well suited to address his mental illness are not available within the institution. More appropriate programming is within the community. Based on expert opinions, Mr. Sabree will benefit from specialized treatment in a VA setting. Mr. Sabree presents as invested in such treatment recommendations. Mr. Sabree has a significant support system to assist him with transition.

The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "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." In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Sabree's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board has also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Sabree's risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Sabree's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Mr. Sabree is rehabilitated and merits parole at this time.

Special Conditions: Reserve to Veteran Affairs Residential Treatment Program (must complete); Waive work for program/disability; Curfew must be at home between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.; ELMO-electronic monitoring; Must take prescribed medication; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; No contact with victim's family; Must have mental health counseling for PTSD; Mandatory – REACH program or other program to address PTSD.

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

Pamela Murphy *p.m.s*
Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

4/20/22
Date