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*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*

**PAROLE BOARD**

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Paul M. Treseler  
Chairman

Michael J. Callahan  
Executive Director

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**ABDULLAH SABREE**

**(Formerly known as William Johnson)**

**W35096**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing  
**DATE OF HEARING:** November 1, 2016  
**DATE OF DECISION:** February 13, 2018

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe

**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 not a suitable candidate for parole. Parole is denied with a review scheduled in five years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On July 31, 1975, in Suffolk County Superior Court, Abdullah Sabree (F/K/A William Johnson) was convicted by a jury of the first degree murder of Hakim Jamal. A sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole was imposed on Mr. Sabree. The sentence was later commuted by Governor Michael S. Dukakis on March 25, 1987, to a term of 21 years and 6 weeks to life. Two of Mr. Sabree's co-defendants, Enfrid Brown Jr. and John Clinkscales, were also convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.<sup>1</sup> Two additional co-defendants, Phillips Key and Issac Mitchell, were brought to trial in January 1976.

<sup>1</sup>This was the second jury trial in this matter. On August 2, 1972, Mr. Sabree, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Clinkscales were each convicted of first degree murder and armed burglary, following their first jury trial in Suffolk Superior Court.

Hakim Jamal occupied a third floor apartment with his wife and several other individuals. On May 1, 1973, at about 11 p.m., Mr. Sabree and his co-defendants (members of an organization called "De Mau Mau") drove to Mr. Jamal's apartment. They procured various firearms, including handguns, carbines, and a rifle and forced their way into the apartment. Mr. Sabree turned down the hall toward the bedroom. He kicked open the bedroom door and pointed a rifle at one of the residents, but then backed away. Mr. Key forced open the living room door and pinned a different resident between the open door and a wall. Mr. Jamal attempted to raise a shotgun that was next to the chair in which he was sitting. Mr. Key quickly lay down on the floor. Mr. Mitchell fired several shots at Mr. Jamal, killing him.

All five intruders left the apartment. Four of the five men then drove away. After a brief investigation, the police apprehended Mr. Sabree and his co-defendants. Mr. Key remained a fugitive for over two years.

## **II. PAROLE REVIEW HEARING ON NOVEMBER 1, 2016**

Mr. Sabree, now 65-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on November 1, 2016, for a review hearing. Mr. Sabree's parole history includes multiple prior releases, all of which resulted in his return to custody for parole violations. Mr. Sabree was represented by Northeastern University School of Law Student Attorney Caleb Koufman during his appearance before the Board.

During his parole hearing, Mr. Sabree gave sworn testimony regarding his military service during the Vietnam War. Specifically, Mr. Sabree testified that he had served a tour of duty in Vietnam, where he had been decorated with the Silver Star for acts of bravery in battle. Mr. Sabree also claimed to have been awarded the Purple Heart, as a result of being wounded by enemy fire. In addition to his sworn testimony, Mr. Sabree provided the Parole Board with a memorandum documenting his life history, as well as a parole plan that he intended to follow if released. Mr. Sabree's submissions to the Board also included paperwork related to his military service. Specifically, Mr. Sabree provided the Parole Board with a document from the Department of Defense, commonly referred to as a DD-214. The information contained in this document corroborated Mr. Sabree's testimony with regard to his military record, his status as a combat veteran, and his receipt of numerous military decorations.

In preparation for his parole hearing, Mr. Sabree had engaged the assistance of a consultant for the Veterans Administration for the purpose of developing a parole plan that could help him transition back into society. In order to assist Mr. Sabree in developing his parole plan further, the consultant obtained a release from Mr. Sabree for access to his military records. However, the official records of Mr. Sabree's military service received by that consultant in January 2017 contradicted Mr. Sabree's testimony at his parole hearing and the information contained in the DD-214 (as previously submitted to the Board). The employee notified the Parole Board, as well as Mr. Sabree's attorneys, of these inconsistencies. At Mr. Sabree's request, the evidentiary record of his parole hearing was kept open, so that he could have time to prepare a supplemental memorandum for the Board that addressed the inconsistency between his testimony and the official records of his military service.

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Each of these convictions, however, was reversed and remanded for new trials by the Supreme Judicial Court on February 14, 1975.



In a supplemental memorandum submitted to the Parole Board on April 10, 2017, Mr. Sabree confessed to having perjured himself during his testimony before the Board at his parole hearing on November 1, 2016. A review of all of the documentation confirmed that Mr. Sabree had served in the military during the Vietnam War, but that he had not been deployed overseas. He had not been a combat veteran, nor had he been awarded the silver star or purple heart. Further, it was determined that Mr. Sabree had spent much of his military service in prison. It was also discovered that Mr. Sabree intended to seek government benefits regarding his fabricated military history, should he be granted parole.

The Board considered oral testimony from Dr. James Monroe (a clinical psychologist who had evaluated Mr. Sabree), Thomas Hannon (a former employee of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs), Lyn Levy (Director of Span), and Maria Turner (a lifelong friend of Mr. Sabree), all of whom testified in support of parole. The Board also considered a letter from the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office in opposition to parole.

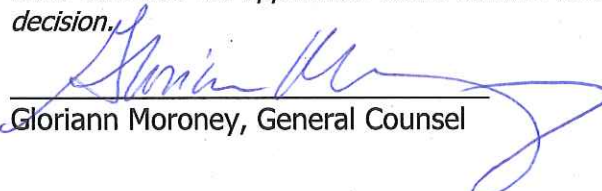
### **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Sabree has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. The Board believes that Mr. Sabree has, for decades, perpetrated a fraud against the Commonwealth and the Veterans Administration through an accumulation of lies about his criminal culpability and his military service.

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." 120 C.M.R. 300.04. 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 standard to the circumstances of Mr. Sabree's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Abdullah Sabree is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Sabree's next appearance before the Board will take place in five years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Sabree to continue working towards his full rehabilitation.

*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.*

  
Gloriann Moroney, General Counsel

2/13/18  
Date