



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**CHARLES THOMPSON**

**W60002**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** August 28, 2018

**DATE OF DECISION:** April 19, 2019

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa, 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 a suitable candidate for parole. Parole is granted to Sober House on or after 14 days from the date of the decision, but not before completion of Violence Reduction and Criminal Thinking and with special conditions.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On January 30, 1996, following a jury trial in Norfolk Superior Court, Charles Thompson was convicted of unarmed robbery and assault and battery. For the conviction of unarmed robbery, Mr. Thompson was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole under the Commonwealth's habitual offender statute. The assault and battery conviction was placed on file. The Supreme Judicial Court transferred the case from the Appeals Court, *sua sponte*, and affirmed the convictions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Commonwealth v. Thompson*, 427 Mass. 729 (1998).

On October 9, 1994, at approximately 1:00 a.m., Charles Thompson (age 33) attacked and robbed a 37-year-old doctor in the hallway of his Brookline apartment building. The doctor had dropped his wife at the apartment building and planned to park and walk back with his 13-year-old daughter. The doctor grew concerned, however, when he noticed a man exit a gray car and quickly follow his wife into the apartment building. The doctor told his daughter to wait in the car, while he went to look after his wife (who had already hurried into the apartment and shut the door). As the doctor entered the hallway of the apartment complex, Mr. Thompson attacked him, punching him repeatedly in the face and breaking his glasses. Mr. Thompson also threatened to kill him. After stealing the doctor's wallet and watch, Mr. Thompson fled. The doctor called the police. He and his wife gave a description of the assailant, and the doctor's daughter described the car he fled in.

Shortly thereafter, Boston municipal housing officers questioned two men parked in a car, which matched the reported description and was discovered to be stolen. The driver, Joseph Williams, was found to have the doctor's credit cards in his pocket, and the passenger, Charles Thompson, was wearing the doctor's watch. The doctor's wallet was found on the floor of the car. The doctor and his wife were brought to the scene of the arrest, where they identified Mr. Thompson as the assailant.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON AUGUST 28, 2018**

Charles Thompson, now 57-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on August 28, 2018. He was represented by Attorney Russell Sobelman. After his initial hearing in 2009, Mr. Thompson was paroled on January 28, 2010. On July 28, 2010, however, Mr. Thompson was arrested for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon (knife), and his parole was revoked. Mr. Thompson was denied parole after a revocation review hearing in 2011. Following his 2014 review hearing, Mr. Thompson was to be paroled to a long term residential program, after a step down to lower security for a year. While in lower security, however, Mr. Thompson received disciplinary reports for profanity and possession of drugs, and his parole was provisionally rescinded. On June 23, 2016, the Board voted to release Mr. Thompson to a long term residential facility. In October 2017, Mr. Thompson was involved in a domestic assault and was returned to custody. On January 24, 2018, Mr. Thompson's parole revocation was affirmed, and he was put on the next available list (PONAL).

Mr. Thompson did not make an opening statement, but, later in the hearing, stated how he had spent most of his life in prison due to an addiction to crack cocaine. He explained that he did not attack his victims out of anger, but rather, to feed his addiction. Mr. Thompson expressed shame about that part of his life, but assured the Board he is on a continuous path of positive change. When Board Members questioned him about his last parole violation, Mr. Thompson explained that when he broke up with his long-term girlfriend, he started dating another woman. The two women were involved in a fist-fight, and he stepped in to try to break it up. Mr. Thompson was not charged and denied any domestic abuse. He informed the Board that he has cut off contact with both women, nor would he have any contact with either, if released. Mr. Thompson acknowledged his history of bad choices, including that of rushing into unhealthy relationships.

The Board questioned Mr. Thompson as to how he could do better on parole, if released again. Mr. Thompson answered that, through the Alternatives to Violence Program, he has now learned to pause when faced with conflict. He thinks ahead as to which choices would end in a positive, rather than negative, outcome. He shared that he has been sober for over 20 years and tries to attend Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous 3 times a week, as well as talk with his sponsor. Mr. Thompson added that he sees a mental health counselor every two weeks and is medicated for anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He expressed his remorse that he let down family and friends, particularly Lyn Levy of the Span prisoner re-entry program. Mr. Thompson stated that his mother and sister would help to support him, if released. Mr. Thompson requested a release to a long term residential program, where he could enroll in job-skills / job-readiness training. He assured the Board that he has support in the community and would continue with mental health counseling and Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous meetings, as well.

Norfolk Assistant District Attorney Michael McGee testified in opposition to parole and submitted a letter of opposition.

### **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Charles Thompson has demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Re-incarceration has served its purpose.

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. Thompson'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. Thompson's risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Thompson's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Charles Thompson is rehabilitated and, therefore, merits parole at this time. Parole is granted to Sober House on or after 14 days from the date of this decision, but not before completion of Violence Reduction and Criminal Thinking and with special conditions.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Waive work for two weeks; Must be home between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. or PO discretion; Electronic monitoring – GPS.; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with agency policy; supervise for liquor, testing in accordance with agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; No contact or association with Lyva Ambers; Must have mental health counseling for healthy relationships and anxiety; Residential program Sober House; Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous at least three times/week.

*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.*



Shara Benedetti, Acting General Counsel

4/19/19

Date