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PAROLE BOARD

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Paul M. Treseler
Chairman

DECISION
IN THE MATTER OF
COREY WALKER

W60782

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing
DATE OF HEARING: August 4, 2015
DATE OF DECISION: November 4, 2015

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Lee Gartenberg, Ina Howard-Hogan, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying 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 in four years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On June 13, 1996, in Suffolk Superior Court, Corey Walker pleaded guilty to murder in the second degree and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole after serving 15 years.¹

The facts of the governing offense are as follows: On September 5, 1995, Corey Walker (age 20), Kevin Scott, and Willie Scott encountered the victim, Jesse Shamele Baker, in Dorchester. Mr. Baker was acquainted with the two Scott brothers. Walker, however, had never met Mr. Baker, but had heard that (earlier in the year) Mr. Baker had allegedly set up a shooting that targeted Kevin Scott. All four men eventually traveled to Phillip Jones' home on Navillus Terrace in Dorchester. When they arrived, Jones was on his porch with a number of

¹ There was a co-defendant in the case, Phillip Jones, who was convicted of accessory before the fact of murder, and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

other individuals from the neighborhood. Jones began yelling at Mr. Baker and told him that he "couldn't stand him" and that he "always wanted to do something to him." Walker then went to the porch, and Jones motioned for him to go into the hallway. In the hallway area, they had a brief conversation during which Jones gave Walker a loaded .357 magnum revolver, telling him that if Mr. Baker kept arguing, then "do what you got to do." Walker came down from the porch to the street and encountered Mr. Baker, who was yelling up to Jones. Walker said that Mr. Baker "talked too much" and they began a verbal confrontation with each other. Walker continued to exchange words with Mr. Baker and, after looking up to Jones to "get a nod" to shoot Mr. Baker, Walker lifted his shirt and removed the .357 magnum revolver that Jones had given him. Walker then shot Mr. Baker and fled the scene.

On October 10, 1995, after an in-depth investigation, Walker was arrested by Boston police. Walker provided a tape recorded statement that detailed his involvement in the shooting. He also told police about Phillip Jones' participation. Walker told the police that while he was on the porch, Jones gave him a .357 handgun and told him that "this will do the job," and that Jones would nod to him when it was time to shoot Mr. Baker.

II. CRIMINAL AND PAROLE HISTORY

Corey Walker has an extensive criminal history that began with his first arraignment as a juvenile (age 9) for malicious destruction of property. His criminal history includes convictions for assault with a dangerous weapon, armed robbery, threats, operating to end lives, possession of burglarious tools, and illegal firearms possession. Walker appeared before the Board for his initial parole hearing on August 10, 2010. The Board denied parole with a review in five years, noting that "Mr. Walker has demonstrated extremely poor adjustment during his incarceration. He has over 200 disciplinary reports and is currently housed in the Special Management Unit at MCI-Shirley. He has had several returns to higher custody...due to...assaults on staff, fights with other inmates, weapons charges, and possession of drugs and alcohol."

III. PAROLE HEARING ON AUGUST 4, 2015

Corey Walker, now age 40, appeared before the Parole Board for this review hearing without legal representation. He is currently incarcerated at Old Colony Correctional Center (OCCC). Walker did not provide an opening statement, but told the Board that "everything's pretty much what it is." Board Members asked pertinent questions about Walker's upbringing, mental health history, and gang involvement. Walker described a childhood that included involvement with the Department of Social Services as a young child due to his mother's drug addiction. He also had commitments to the Department of Youth Services beginning at a young age. There were multiple deaths in his family, including the unsolved murder of a brother that Walker viewed as a father figure. After the murder of his brother, Walker testified that he "blacked out the world" and felt "unguided." Walker said that he traveled between Massachusetts and a dangerous and violent area of Chicago for 8-10 years as a child and adolescent. He became involved in a Boston gang and was promoted to a captain, where he was responsible for selling drugs and guns, and for "putting out hits" that involved assaults on others. He acknowledged that he was an influential leader of the gang and, through his criminal activities, contributed significant sums of money to the gang.

Regarding the murder of Mr. Baker, Walker stated that it was "really chaotic that day" and that "it happened fast." Walker testified that he had learned about a feud involving his friends and Mr. Baker. When Walker and his friends came into contact with Mr. Baker, Walker said that he gave him three warnings to back up. Instead, he said that Mr. Baker lunged at him, and Walker responded by shooting his gun one time. Walker said that he is unsure if the bullet from his gun killed the victim. Walker also said that the victim was wearing a hooded sweatshirt and he did not recognize him at first. Eventually, he realized that they had played football together in high school. Walker described the victim as "a good dude" and said that "I know that I killed a friend. I'm not happy about it."

Walker told the Board that he struggled with mental health issues for much of his life and has received several diagnoses. At around the age of 6, Walker said that he began having difficulties with attention, hyperactivity, and learning. He was prescribed Ritalin until age 35. Walker testified that he received a mood disorder diagnosis while in DYS (around age 13) and was prescribed Prozac. While incarcerated, Walker attempted suicide on numerous occasions. He testified that he currently takes his medication as prescribed and understands that his behavior is markedly different when he does not take his medication. He testified that his last instance of self-harm occurred in 2013, but stated that he does not currently experience depression. Walker attributes the right medication and a change of attitude as the primary sources of his improved behavior and mental health.

Walker admitted that he remained gang involved during his incarceration, but has attempted to renounce from all gang activity for approximately seven years. He understands the process of officially renouncing through the Department of Correction. However, he assured the Parole Board that he is no longer considered a gang member by anyone in the institution and stated that he officially renounced with the leaders of his gang. Further, Walker has not had a positive adjustment to incarceration. He has incurred over 272 disciplinary reports throughout his incarceration, including 70 disciplinary infractions since his last hearing in 2010. Walker referred to the time period in which he incurred those disciplinary reports as "my angry years" and said that, approximately three or four years ago, he became "just tired" of living that lifestyle and is now "too old." He acknowledged that his poor conduct had prevented him from progressing in rehabilitation, and that he has had many years of poor adjustment. Walker identified talking on the phone with his grandson for the first time, the incarceration of two of his sons, and placements in the Disciplinary Detention Unit as various turning points in his life. Walker testified that he now occupies his time by participating in groups, leading a Positive Energy group, attending religious services, playing basketball, making collages, and writing music.

Several Board Members praised Walker for his efforts over the past several years to invest in rehabilitation and for his current presentation before the Board. However, Board Members also encouraged Walker to be realistic about his expectations for parole at this stage in his rehabilitation. Board Members stated that he would need to demonstrate a longer period of positive adjustment, and provide further evidence that he has been rehabilitated, before he could seriously be considered for parole. Walker identified his parole plan as a desire to step-down to a minimum security prison, followed by placement in a pre-release unit, and then placement in a program. Walker testified that his ultimate goal is to return home and be with his family, including his sisters, children, and grandchildren.


There were no individuals in support of or in opposition to Walker's parole at this hearing. The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office submitted a letter in opposition to parole, noting that "[Walker's] lack of program completion and numerous disciplinary reports demonstrate that Mr. Walker has not taken any initiative to better himself and has a high risk of returning to violent criminal tendencies if released."

IV. DECISION

Walker has incurred over 272 disciplinary reports during his nearly 20 years of incarceration, including several returns to higher custody and Disciplinary Detention Unit placements. He admits to being gang-involved while in prison. Walker has a history of mental health issues that have led to several suicide attempts and self-injurious behavior, as recently as 2013. However, Walker has recently demonstrated a positive shift in his thinking and behaviors and has emerged as a leader in the institution. He attributes his current progress to being prescribed appropriate medications, his compliance with the medications, and his investment in positive rehabilitation. The Board commends Walker for his recent commitment to rehabilitation and encourages him to continue on this path, as he needs to demonstrate a longer period of positive adjustment before he would be considered for parole release.

The standard we apply 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 here, it is the unanimous opinion of the Board that Corey Walker does not merit parole at this time. The review will be in four years, during which time Walker should engage in substantive rehabilitative programming to address substance abuse, anger, violence, and any potential mental health issues that could impair his ability to function as a law abiding citizen in society.

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.



Michael J. Callahan, Executive Director

November 4, 2015
Date