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Charlene Bonner
Chairperson

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Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

CRAIG HOOD

W58826

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: July 29, 2014

DATE OF DECISION: December 2, 2014

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Ina Howard-Hogan, Tina Hurley

DECISION OF 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 writing, 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 from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Craig Hood appeared before the Massachusetts Parole Board for his initial parole hearing on July 29, 2014.¹

On June 19, 1995, in Suffolk Superior Court, Hood pleaded guilty to the second degree murders of Celine Kirk, age 17, and her 23 year old sister, Tracy Brown. For the murders, the Court sentenced Hood to two consecutive life sentences. In addition, the Court sentenced Hood to concurrent sentences of seven to ten years for assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon for an earlier shooting of Glenn McLaughlin, and assault and battery with a

¹ This is Mr. Hood's first appearance before the Board. The Board granted Mr. Hood's requests to postpone hearings scheduled in 2008 and 2013. As grounds, Hood, through counsel, cited his ongoing appeals of his convictions.

dangerous weapon for an assault on a correctional officer. Hood committed that offense on April 5, 1994, while awaiting trial at the Suffolk County Jail.²

On June 15, 1993, Boston Police responded to a residence in Dorchester for a report of a man shot. On arrival, they spoke to the victim of the shooting, Glenn McGlaughlin, who had suffered a single gunshot wound to his lower leg. McGlaughlin reported that an individual named "Craig" had shot him following a verbal confrontation. Later that day, while McGlaughlin was being treated at Boston City Hospital, a police detective showed him a photographic array, which included a photograph of Hood. McGlaughlin positively identified Hood as the person who shot him. The following day, the police applied for and obtained an arrest warrant. Hood remained at large.

On September 29, 1993, at approximately 9:15 p.m., Boston Police officers responded to an apartment in Mattapan after Boston Police were notified by a New England Telephone supervisor of a call for assistance from a young child. Upon arrival, a two-year-old child answered the door, and stated, "Mommy is on the floor." Officers entered the apartment and discovered the bodies of the child's mother, Tracy Brown and her sister, Celine Kirk. Both women died from gunshot wounds to the head.

On October 2, 1993, the police arrested Hood, who had turned 18 years old in July of that year, at a residence in Brockton on four outstanding warrants, including a warrant for the shooting of McGlaughlin. The following day, on October 3, 1993, Hood gave an audiotaped statement to the Boston Police confessing to the murders of Kirk and Brown, as well as to the earlier shooting of McGlaughlin.

Following his sentencing, Hood sought to withdraw his guilty pleas on several occasions, and has been denied each time. In 2002, the Appeals Court affirmed the denial of his motion to withdraw his guilty pleas, concluding that the trial court had conducted a thorough plea colloquy and that Hood had fully understood the proceedings. In 2009, Hood filed another motion to withdraw his guilty plea and the trial court denied the motion in 2012. His most recent appeal was filed *pro se* on May 8, 2014, wherein he claims that (1) his statement to police was obtained in violation of his constitutional rights and (2) that he was disadvantaged by ineffective assistance of counsel. He seeks to be paroled to one of his life sentences.

II. CRIMINAL AND INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

Hood was 18 years old at the time of the murders. His criminal record began in April of 1990 when, at age 14, he received juvenile commitments for illegal firearm possession, use without authority, knowingly receiving a stolen motor vehicle, larceny from a person, malicious destruction of property, and possession of a Class D substance. Hood's adult criminal record consists of a September 25, 1995 adult conviction for possession of a shotgun. This crime predated the murders and the McGlaughlin shooting because he was arraigned for it on February 1, 1993.

² The concurrent sentences have since expired. If Hood were granted a parole, he would then begin serving his second consecutive life sentence.

Over the 20 years of his incarceration for the murders, Hood incurred 25 disciplinary reports, the last being in October 2010 for refusing a direct order. He received other disciplinary reports for fighting, refusing work assignments, lying, obscene language, and possession of unauthorized items. Of particular note, in July 2003, Hood received a disciplinary report for attempting to interfere with correctional staff who were restraining another inmate. Hood reportedly approached the officers in an aggressive manner and had to be restrained himself. A correctional officer sustained an injury to his hand while restraining Hood.³ Hood was sanctioned with approximately 14 months of disciplinary detention for the offense.

While Hood obtained his GED in 1996, he did not engage in rehabilitative programming until February 2008, or approximately 13 years into his incarceration, and six months before his first scheduled parole hearing.⁴ His certificates indicate that he completed Transition Planning in 2008; Money Smart in 2011; Turning the Page in 2013; and Computer Skills, Life Skills, and Fatherhood in Action in 2014. He has also participated in numerous religious programs, including Protestant Bible Study, Chaplain Discussion Group, and the Protestant Christian Prayer Group.

III. PAROLE HEARING ON JULY 29, 2014

Craig Hood gave an opening statement apologizing to the family of the victims. He said he is "truly sorry for the things that took place," and that he wished there was more he could do to help the family to heal, "but there isn't." Hood said that had the victims' family known him before the murders, they would have known that "that just wasn't [him] that day," and that he does not understand "why it got that bad."

Hood said he has been in prison for 21 years. He was eligible for parole in 2008, but chose to postpone the hearing because he had an appeal pending. He was scheduled for another hearing in 2013, but chose to postpone that hearing as well due to a pending appeal.

Hood said he currently has a pending appeal based upon his sentence structure. He believed he was pleading guilty to second degree murders and would be sentenced to concurrent terms of 15 years to life. He admits that the sentencing judge informed him that the life sentences were to run consecutively.⁵ However, he said his attorney had told him that because he had accepted responsibility for the murders, he would be paroled after 15 years if he stayed out of trouble. He later learned that he had consecutive life sentences, and therefore is seeking to have the case overturned.

Hood requests that the Board parole him to his other life sentence. He said he is currently taking barber classes, going to church, and undertaking Bible study. He said he also

³ Hood suffered no injuries.

⁴ Hood's first hearing was scheduled for August of 2008 which he postponed while pursuing an appeal of his conviction.

⁵ It should be noted that Hood included a copy of the transcript of his plea hearing among the documents in support of his latest appeal, dated May 8, 2014. The transcript indicates that Hood acknowledged that he understood the sentencing judge's explanation he would be serving two life sentences consecutively, and that he would have to serve a minimum of 30 years before becoming eligible for parole to the community.

works as unit runner for four hours each day and has been staying out of trouble for the last four years by staying to himself.

Hood became tearful and emotional in discussing his background. He said his mother passed away when he was six years old and he resided with his father in Florida and New York before settling in Mattapan at age 15. Hood began attending middle school in Boston, but stopped attending soon thereafter, and got involved with neighborhood "friends." He "hung out with older guys," and got involved in stealing cars. He stole a lot of cars, got caught for some, but got away with most.

Hood said he was first arrested in Massachusetts in 1990 after he tried to shoot someone. He said he and his friend were riding their bicycles and came upon a woman being beaten by her boyfriend and screaming for help. They yelled at the man and the man came charging at them. His friend handed him "a little pistol," and he attempted to fire it, but it "jammed." He handed the pistol back to his friend, who "chambered" it and gave it back to him. He then shot at the man. Hood said he was involved in other crimes as a juvenile, including robberies. He said he would commit the robberies either unarmed or armed with knives or sticks, but never guns.

Hood said he was living in Brockton around the time he shot McGlaughlin, and used to come to Boston daily, even after shooting McGlaughlin. He was not employed at the time, and would support himself by selling drugs and committing robberies "here and there."

Regarding the McGlaughlin shooting, Hood said McGlaughlin saw him and his friend get robbed in a park, and McGlaughlin later came and told him that he had seen the robbery unfolding but did not want to get involved. Hood became angry at McGlaughlin for telling him after the fact. Hood said McGlaughlin began yelling "like he wanted to fight," and someone then handed him a hat containing a gun. He said he took the gun from the hat and shot McGlaughlin in the leg because he was unable to fight due to his hand being "busted." He said the gun he used to shoot McGlaughlin was the same gun used to commit the murders.

Regarding the murders of Kirk and Brown, Hood said he knew only Celine Kirk, whom he had met on his eighteenth birthday. Hood said Kirk had paged him from her sister's apartment and told him she wanted to see him. He was "kind of involved" with her at the time, but was actually "with" his son's mother. When he got to the apartment, he saw only Kirk there. Soon after he got there, they began arguing because Kirk had seen him with his son's mother earlier and was yelling and accusing him of playing "games" with her. He said he was at the apartment for about a half hour before he started shooting.

Hood said he had never met Brown before and that he had never been over to Brown's apartment prior to the day of the murders. Brown came home while he was at the apartment arguing with Kirk. He said at some point during the argument he "just lost it." He shot Kirk in the living room area, and then went to another room and shot Brown because he "became afraid" and "didn't want to go to prison." Hood said after he shot Brown he went and shot Kirk a second time "out of fear."

Hood said he is not sure why he did it, and has been doing a lot of reading, trying to figure out what it is. He said it started off as just yelling and then he became "hyper." He

believes it was just some issues from his childhood that kept progressing. He said "I think that day I just lost control. I just lost it! It just happened!"

Hood said he was arrested in Brockton at the home of his son's mother on unrelated warrants for stolen motor vehicle and firearm possession. After his arrest, Hood asked to speak to the police and voluntarily confessed to the murders because he felt "bothered inside." He said the police asked him about the McGlaughlin shooting during his confession and he confessed to it as well.

When asked why he challenged the voluntariness of the confession in his appeal, Hood said he was "just following advice." Hood said he had decided to plead guilty because he committed the murders and was trying to spare anyone from having to go through the trial because he has always felt bad about it and wanted to do "the right thing."

The Board asked Hood why he has not engaged in programming to address violence. Hood said he has tried to get into the Alternatives to Violence and Correctional Recovery Academy programs, but has not been able to do so because of his sentence structure. He also said he recently began seeing a mental health therapist in order to prepare to speak to the Parole Board about the murders, and that he plans to continue seeing the therapist once or twice per month.

Only Hood's wife spoke in support of his parole. The victims' son, daughter, sister, uncle, and Suffolk Assistant District Attorney Charles Bartoloni all spoke passionately in opposition.

In closing, and after hearing from the victims' family, Hood denied murdering Kirk and Brown, and instead blamed unnamed members of the family for their deaths. Hood said:

"My intentions were good from the beginning. The reason you why you may feel that I don't get quite emotional over it was because I was trying to spare people a deeper hurt. But enough is enough because I feel their pain and the pain is not going anywhere. And I think they truly need to understand what happened, and it may be hard for them to accept. The reason there's no emotion from me as far as taking the life, or the lives; I didn't take their lives. I tried to help cover up their family; what their family members did. And if this is what they need to hear to heal, then I'm going to tell them. Their own family took their family's life. I just tried to help. And the reason so many things are inconsistent is because I wasn't there to tell exactly how it happened. I only know what my lawyer was saying, and what the police was saying...."

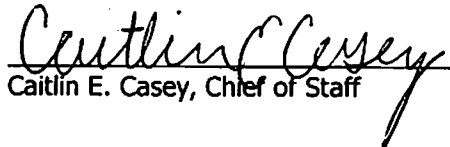
IV. DECISION

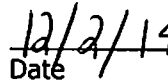
Craig Hood murdered two women in cold blood and has not yet been able to give a consistent account of what occurred and why. Hood has a history of violent criminal and antisocial behavior which includes prior shootings, armed robberies, drug dealing and motor vehicle thefts. Hood has not engaged in programming to address this behavior. He has incurred 25 disciplinary reports over the course of this incarceration, including the use or threatened use of violence. As demonstrated at the hearing, Hood continues to vacillate

between acceptance and denial of responsibility for the murders of Tracy Brown and Celine Kirk. In short, Craig Hood is not rehabilitated.

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 Craig Hood does not merit parole at this time. The period of review will be five years from the date of the hearing, during which time Hood should improve his conduct and engage in rehabilitative programs to address issues of anger, violence, antisocial behavior, criminal thinking, and lack of empathy.

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.


Caitlin E. Casey, Chief of Staff


Date