



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

DARRELL WILLIAMS

W88140

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: February 4, 2020

DATE OF DECISION: September 8, 2020

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Karen McCarthy, Colette Santa

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 two years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On August 9, 2006, in Suffolk County Superior Court, Darrell Williams pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of 27-year-old Terrance Young. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm and received a 4 to 5 year concurrent sentence. An additional count of possession of ammunition was placed on file.

On February 1, 2005, multiple witnesses observed 19-year-old Darrell Williams in the area of Eustis and Dearborn Streets in Roxbury, firing a pistol several times in the direction of Terrance Young before fleeing the scene. Just before 5:00 p.m., officers arrived as EMS were treating Mr. Young, but Mr. Young succumbed to injuries sustained from multiple gunshot wounds. Several witnesses identified Mr. Williams by name and provided police with descriptions of his appearance

and clothing. In a subsequent interview, Mr. Williams admitted to police that he shot and killed Mr. Young.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON FEBRUARY 4, 2020

Darrell Williams, now 35-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on February 4, 2020, for an initial hearing. He was not represented by counsel. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Williams apologized to Mr. Young's friends and family for the suffering they endured because of his crime. He stated that "Mr. Young did absolutely nothing to provoke" his behavior and prays that those who have been burdened with the consequences of his actions can find peace. Mr. Williams explained that he grew up in the Orchard Park housing development in Roxbury, where he was exposed to violence and criminal behavior at a young age. Through the support of his family and the vigilance of his mother, however, he was able to stay out of trouble during childhood and early adolescence. Mr. Williams also stated that lead poisoning as a child resulted in his learning and behavioral difficulties at school. When Board Members asked how he became involved with a criminal lifestyle at age 17, Mr. Williams responded that he was influenced by gang-affiliated acquaintances, who introduced him to selling drugs. He was a frustrated, selfish young man, who was angry at his circumstances. He believed that selling drugs was an "easy way" to get what he wanted.

When Board Members questioned him as to the events leading up to the governing offense, Mr. Williams explained that his criminal lifestyle led to an incident where he was shot, and his friend murdered, by the brother of Mr. Young. Mr. Williams stated that Mr. Young and Mr. Young's girlfriend were present during this shooting, and that people in the neighborhood were aware of his cooperation in the investigation leading to the arrest of Mr. Young's brother. Mr. Williams further explained that, on the day of the murder, Mr. Young's girlfriend started a heated verbal argument with him about how his cooperation with law enforcement led to the incarceration of Mr. Young's brother. The argument ended when Mr. Young's girlfriend left the area. A few minutes later, however, Mr. Young appeared in the area and began socializing with the others present. Mr. Williams told the Board he "assumed" that Mr. Young had been called by his girlfriend and had arrived to harm him. So, Mr. Williams retrieved a neighborhood gun that was stored a short distance away and then returned to the area.

Mr. Williams approached Mr. Young from the rear, shot him in the leg so that he could not run away, and then shot him three or four more times once he fell to the sidewalk. He then ran from the scene, handing the gun to a person from the neighborhood. Mr. Williams admitted to the Board that Mr. Young never saw him coming. The Board discussed, at length, their struggle to understand what drove Mr. Williams to shoot Mr. Young in an execution-like manner. Mr. Williams denied that he was motivated by revenge, as he had seen Mr. Young prior to that day and had never intended to do him harm. He stated, however, that he believed he was going to be shot again, so he did anything he could to prevent that from happening. Although he confessed to police, Mr. Williams believed for a time that he "had to" shoot Mr. Young because of the "street mentality" that influenced him. He now understands that Mr. Young was not a threat to him that day, nor did he do anything to provoke his actions.

The Board commended Mr. Williams for his positive institutional adjustment, noting that he was only cited four times throughout his incarceration for minor disciplinary issues. Mr. Williams explained that, from the beginning of his sentence, he knew his criminal mindset was "destructive" and that he wanted to live differently. His faith has been a driving force in his

rehabilitation, and he has benefited from significant program involvement, including Alternatives to Violence and Jericho Circle. The Board noted that he is currently enrolled in Countdown to Freedom and spends his time working, organizing bible study, and facilitating the church choir. Mr. Williams told the Board that he met with institutional staff (around 2006) to verbally renounce any affiliation he had with a security threat group. He believes, however, that a formal renunciation is not reflected in his records. The Board advised Mr. Williams to meet with institutional staff to begin the formal renunciation process which he agreed would be beneficial. Mr. Williams expressed his confidence that he could successfully reintegrate into society and plans to speak with at-risk youth about his journey, so that they may choose a different path.

Mr. Williams' uncle and sister testified in support of parole. Mr. Young's mother, daughter, cousin, girlfriend, and girlfriend's mother testified in opposition to parole. Boston Police Commissioner William Gross submitted a letter in opposition to parole. The Board also considered additional letters of opposition.

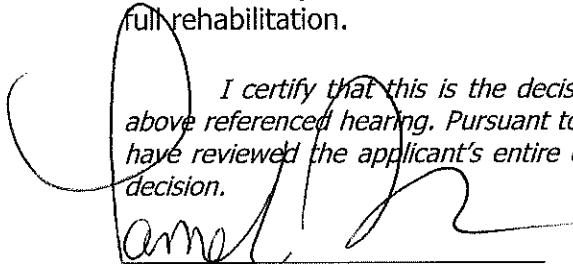
III. DECISION

It is the opinion of the Board that although Mr. Williams has maintained a positive overall adjustment, he has yet to demonstrate a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Williams has acknowledged his criminal culpability in the murder of Terrance Young. It appears that the victim was shot in retaliation for a previous gang conflict, however Mr. Williams had difficulty admitting this, as he stated he did it out of fear. Mr. Williams is encouraged to pursue renunciation through the Department of Correction. In addition, he should continue to engage in rehabilitative treatment and programming to further address his causative factors. He was recently accepted into the Restorative Justice Reading Group.

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. Williams' 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. Williams' risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Williams' case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Darrell Williams is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Williams' next appearance before the Board will take place in two years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages him 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.


Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

9/8/2020
Date