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

**PAROLE BOARD**

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Tina M. Hurley  
Chair

Lian Hogan  
Executive Director

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**DAVID PROULX**  
**W40272**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** November 19, 2024

**DATE OF DECISION:** February 24, 2025

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz

**VOTE:** Parole is denied with a review in two years from the date of the hearing.

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY:** On February 14, 1984, after a jury trial in Essex Superior Court, David Proulx was convicted of second-degree murder in the death of 2-year-old Tanya Parker. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Parole was denied after Mr. Proulx's initial hearing in 2005, and after his review hearings in 2010, 2015, and 2020. Mr. Proulx, now 69-years-old, appeared before the Board for a review hearing on November 19, 2024. He was represented by Attorney Deirdre Thurber. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entirety of the video recording of the November 19, 2024, hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** David Proulx began living with Tanya's mother in July 1982. On the morning of December 21, 1982, Mr. Proulx (age 26) stayed at home with Tanya, while her mother took another daughter to school. Tanya's mother last saw her watching television in the living room, while Mr. Proulx sat on a nearby couch. When Tanya's mother returned to the apartment, approximately 10 minutes after she left, Mr. Proulx said, "Come here, quick." He was holding Tanya in the sink, running cold water over her. Tanya was unclothed and unconscious. When Tanya's mother asked what had happened, Mr. Proulx replied, "I don't know what happened to her, I was playing with her [by tossing her over my head] and her eyes rolled back, and she went limp." Attempts to revive Tanya were unsuccessful. She was rushed to the hospital, where it was determined that she was "clinically dead." She was

officially declared deceased five days later. An autopsy determined the cause of death to be a skull fracture with acute subdural hematoma and cerebral edema. This injury was inconsistent with Mr. Proulx's explanation of Tanya's injury. Additional evidence was present that Tanya had been physically abused.

At the time of this offense, Mr. Proulx was on parole from a 15-year sentence for rape of a child with force. His arrest for Tanya's murder resulted in a parole violation warrant on the parole sentence issued on February 15, 1983. Mr. Proulx served approximately 3 years of the prior 15-year sentence before his parole was revoked.<sup>1</sup>

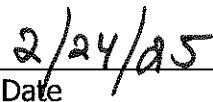
**APPLICABLE STANDARD:** Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. In making this determination, the Board takes into consideration an incarcerated individual's institutional behavior, their participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize the incarcerated individual's risk of recidivism. M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. The Board also considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the incarcerated individual's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board (if applicable).

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** This is Mr. Proulx's 5<sup>th</sup> appearance before the Board. At the time of this offense, Mr. Proulx was on parole. He has received 24 disciplinary reports during his 42 years of incarceration. His most recent disciplinary report was in May 2023, with 5 disciplinary reports since his last hearing. Mr. Proulx has done minimal programming. The Board recognizes Mr. Proulx's employment since March 2023 in the library. Mr. Proulx is encouraged to engage in programming and to develop a comprehensive re-entry plan which will address his need areas.

Mr. Proulx's wife testified in support of parole. The Board also considered an opposition letter submitted by Essex County Assistant District Attorney David O'Sullivan.

*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.*

  
Tina M. Hurley, Chair

  
Date

<sup>1</sup> The Board, concurrent with this decision, allowed Mr. Proulx's request to withdraw the parole violation warrant (W47670) and resume supervision on that sentence.