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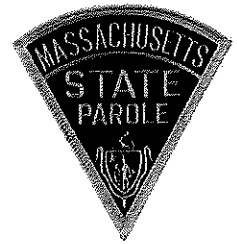
*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*

**PAROLE BOARD**

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**Tina M. Hurley**  
*Chair*

**Daniel Nakamoto**  
*Acting Executive Director*

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**EMMANUEL OKORO**  
**W97755**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Initial Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** April 25, 2023

**DATE OF DECISION:** October 19, 2023

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Tina M. Hurley, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, James Kelcourse, Colette Santa

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On December 28, 2010, following a jury trial in Plymouth County Superior Court, Emmanuel Okoro was convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On December 31, 2007, Emmanuel Okoro, age 15, had been drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana with friends and family. Mr. Okoro and his companions attempted to go to a nearby New Year's Eve party. However, they were turned away at the door by the victim, Markeen Starks, and another young man. The victim was known to Mr. Okoro and his sister and had been involved in a series of violent incidents that appeared to constitute retaliation against the victim's sister after she had spoken to the police regarding an earlier killing.

After the party ended, a crowd gathered outside the party site, and a fight broke out. Mr. Okoro and his companions saw this crowd and walked toward it. Mr. Okoro was carrying a knife. Mr. Okoro and the victim confronted one another and, although it is unclear who started the physical fight between them, Mr. Okoro stabbed the victim multiple times. The victim died from these wounds.

**PAROLE HEARING:** Emmanuel Okoro appeared before the Parole Board on April 25, 2023, and was represented by Attorney Ryan Schiff. The entire video recording of Mr. Okoro's hearing is fully incorporated by reference in the Board's decision.

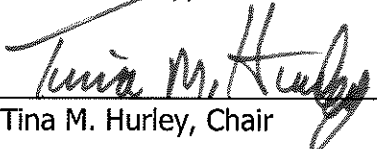
**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." 120 C.M.R. 300.04. In the context of an offender convicted of first or second-degree murder, who was a juvenile at the time the offense was committed, the Board takes into consideration the attributes of youth that distinguish juvenile homicide offenders from similarly situated adult offenders. Consideration of these factors ensures that the parole candidate, who was a juvenile at the time they committed murder, has "a real chance to demonstrate maturity and rehabilitation." *Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk District*, 471 Mass. 12, 30 (2015); See also *Commonwealth v. Okoro*, 471 Mass. 51 (2015). The factors considered by the Board include the offender's "lack of maturity and an underdeveloped sense of responsibility, leading to recklessness, impulsivity, and heedless risk-taking; vulnerability to negative influences and outside pressures, including from their family and peers; limited control over their own environment; lack of the ability to extricate themselves from horrific, crime-producing settings; and unique capacity to change as they grow older." *Id.* The Board also recognizes the petitioner's right to be represented by counsel during his appearance before the Board. *Id.* at 20-24.

The Board has taken into consideration Mr. Okoro's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Emmanuel Okoro's risk of recidivism. After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of offense, the criminal record, the 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, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Emmanuel Okoro is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

The Board is of the opinion that Emmanuel Okoro has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. He was 15-years-old when he stabbed and killed the 19-year-old victim. The Board considered the *Miller/Diatchenko* factors and Dr. Kinscherff's forensic evaluation in reaching this decision. The Board particularly noted that, while juveniles have a unique ability to change and mature, in this case, he is 31-years-old and continues to engage in violent behavior and has multiple disciplinary reports for fighting - as recently as March 16, 2022. While he has engaged in programming, including CRA, Mr. Okoro would benefit from a longer period of rehabilitation to address his violent behavior. He should remain disciplinary report free and get his G.E.D., and engage in the rehabilitative programs available to him.

Mr. Okoro's next appearance before the Board will take place three 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.*

  
Tina M. Hurley, Chair

10/19/23  
Date