

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



PAROLE BOARD

*12 Mercer Road
Natick, Massachusetts 01760*

Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Terrence Reidy
Secretary

Telephone # (508) 650-4500

Facsimile # (508) 650-4599

Gloriann Moroney
Chair

Kevin Keefe
Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

ERIC BROOKS

W41987

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **May 13, 2021**

DATE OF DECISION: **January 12, 2022**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa¹

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 that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole.² Parole is denied with a review scheduled in two years from the date of this hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On December 17, 1985, in Suffolk Superior Court, Eric Brooks pleaded guilty to two counts of aggravated rape and was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences. On that same date, Mr. Brooks pleaded guilty to breaking and entering, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and armed assault with intent to murder. He received two concurrent 7 to 10-year sentences and a concurrent 18 to 20 year sentence, respectively.

On April 17, 1986, in Suffolk Superior Court, Mr. Brooks pleaded guilty to aggravated rape and was given a life sentence to be served concurrently with his second from and after life sentence on his 1985 rape convictions. On that same date, he also pleaded guilty to breaking

¹ Chair Moroney recused.

² One Board Member voted to parole Mr. Brooks.

and entering in the nighttime and the daytime, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and armed robbery, for which he received three concurrent 7 to 10 year sentences.

On July 22, 1985, Eric Brooks, age 25, broke into Victim 1's apartment in Brighton. Victim 1 was awakened by a sound and saw Mr. Brooks in the doorway of her bedroom. He ran towards her bed, put his hand over her face, and put a knife to her throat. Mr. Brooks made her remove her clothes and then proceeded to rape her. When he was finished, he searched her pocketbook and stole some items. Mr. Brooks tied the victim's hands behind her back and her feet together. He then left the apartment.

On July 31, 1985, Mr. Brooks entered Victim 2's apartment. He told her that he was a handyman sent to fix a leaky pipe and displayed a piece of paper with her name and apartment number on it. Victim 2 informed Mr. Brooks that she was ready to leave for work, and that he would have to come back another time. At that point, Mr. Brooks grabbed Victim 2 by the mouth and put a knife to her throat. He told her that he would harm her if she didn't give him money. The victim showed him her pocketbook, and Mr. Brooks took a few dollars from it. He insisted that she had more, telling her that he had seen her counting large amounts of money over the last several nights. After briefly searching the apartment, Mr. Brooks forced Victim 2 into the bedroom at knifepoint, ordered her to remove her clothes, and then proceeded to rape her. When he was finished, he put a rope around her neck and attempted to strangle her. In addition, Mr. Brooks attempted to suffocate the victim by putting a pillow over her face. He also cut her throat, wrists, and shoulder with his knife.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON MAY 13, 2021

Eric Brooks, now 61-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on May 13, 2021, and was represented by student attorneys Stephan Millan and Mathew Stranzl from Boston College Law School. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Brooks expressed his remorse and accepted full responsibility for his crimes. He acknowledged the impact that his crimes have had on his victims, stating that he carries "tremendous guilt" for the "emotional scars" his actions have caused. Mr. Brooks explained that he was on a "self-destructive" path at the time he committed his crimes, describing himself as "reckless and angry." Student Attorney Stranzl also provided an opening statement where he outlined Mr. Brooks' rehabilitative growth, citing his completion of the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) and current participation in the Sex Offender Maintenance Program. Moreover, Student Attorney Stranzl maintains that Mr. Brooks has addressed his causative factors, as he has gained insight on how being sexually abused as a child caused his distorted thoughts as an adult.

Board Members addressed Mr. Brooks' social history, noting that his sexual deviancy began at a young age. Mr. Brooks explained that he was sexually abused as a child, which caused him to grow up with an "overwhelming sense of distrust." In addition, he admitted that he lacked "prosocial skills and values" at the time. Moreover, Mr. Brooks stated that it was easier to express his anger and frustration through "impulsive and reckless" behavior. Although he appeared to understand his sexual deviancy, Mr. Brooks maintains that he did not fantasize or plan on raping his victims. Rather, he claimed that he only intended on committing the robberies. When questioned by the Board as to whether he targeted his victims, Mr. Brooks initially said "No," despite admitting that he watched his victims with binoculars from his rooftop. When questioned further, Mr. Brooks indicated that the victims resembled the woman

who abused him as a child. Mr. Brooks nonetheless stated that it was a "coincidence" he chose their apartments to rob. The Board noted the likelihood of that being the truth, considering Mr. Brooks' past sexually deviant behavior. Mr. Brooks maintains that the sexual assaults were an "impulse" and not his initial intent.

When Board Members questioned the events surrounding the rape of Victim 1, Mr. Brooks stated that he does not dispute the facts of the case. When the Board inquired as to whether this was his first rape victim, Mr. Brooks responded, "Yes." Board Members raised concern as to the rape of Victim 2 and the level of violence inflicted upon her, specifically noting Mr. Brooks' strangulation attempt. While Mr. Brooks acknowledged the significant injuries Victim 2 sustained, he denied having any intent to kill her. As to the amount of rage and violence he exhibited, Mr. Brooks stated, "I was at the point where I didn't care because my life was falling apart."

The Board discussed Mr. Brooks' rehabilitative efforts, noting his completion of (SOTP and his recent resumption of participation in the Sex Offender Maintenance Program. In addition, Mr. Brooks has been a Cadre worker since 2009 at Bridgewater State Hospital, where he participates in the Companion Program assisting mentally handicapped inmates. He stated his experience with the Cadre program was "humbling" and he enjoyed "helping others." When the Board questioned the status of his mental health, Mr. Brooks admitted to hearing voices, having thoughts of self-harm, and experiencing a significant amount of stress. Board Members noted that he is currently being evaluated by mental health clinicians and is currently on medication to reduce his anxiety.

The Board considered testimony in support of parole from several family members of Mr. Brooks. The Board also considered a letter in support of parole from licensed clinical social worker Kristen Hambridge. The Board also considered a letter in opposition from Superintendent Paul Donovan of the Boston Police Department.

III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Eric Brooks has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. In July of 1995, subject robbed and raped at knifepoint two women. Mr. Brooks has a prior conviction for a sexual assault in New York. In October of 2017, he reentered the SOTP Maintenance after having not been a participant in the program for eight years. Mr. Brooks has a long-standing history of sexual deviancy beginning in his teenage years. While subject has completed SOTP and has resumed Maintenance, the Board feels a longer period of participation in Maintenance would be beneficial. The Board considered the clinical opinion submitted by Kristen Hambridge.

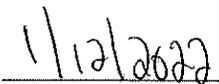
The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the 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. Brooks' 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. Brooks' risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Brooks' case, the Board is of the opinion that Eric Brooks does not merit parole at this time.

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


Date