



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**GARY DONAGHY**

**W38037**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** January 31, 2019

**DATE OF DECISION:** September 18, 2019

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Gloriann Moroney, 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 four years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On February 4, 1981, in Bristol Superior Court, Gary Donaghy pleaded guilty to second degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On May 28, 1980, Gary Donaghy (age 25) went to the home of his friend, Carol Drolet (age 21). When Mr. Donaghy became angry with Ms. Drolet, he placed his belt around her neck and strangled her into unconsciousness. With a knife and scissors, he then stabbed her (at least) 11 times in the face, neck, throat, and chest. Mr. Donaghy left Ms. Drolet lying in a pool of blood on her apartment floor. Her shirt was pulled up and her shorts were down, exposing her underwear. Ms. Drolet died from her injuries. Following an investigation, Mr. Donaghy was arrested for her murder.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JANUARY 31, 2019**

Gary Donaghy, now 64-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for his review hearing on January 31, 2019. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Donaghy was denied parole after his initial hearing in 1995, and after his review hearings in 1998, 2001, 2003, and 2007.

Board Members questioned Mr. Donaghy as to his personal history leading up to the commission of the crime. Mr. Donaghy explained that he suffered from a significant addiction to cocaine after the loss of his grandfather, which had worsened in the year before the murder. His family and friends confronted him regularly about his increasing dependence on cocaine, leading him to seek out other locations to get high. Mr. Donaghy would often use (his friend) Carol Drolet's apartment to get high without consequence. On the day of the murder, Mr. Donaghy and his girlfriend (a different woman) engaged in a heated argument over money that he had stolen from her to fuel his drug habit. Angry and humiliated, Mr. Donaghy left and went to Ms. Drolet's apartment to use cocaine. However, when Ms. Drolet also confronted him about his addiction, Mr. Donaghy "flew into a rage" and strangled her into unconsciousness. When Board Members asked him why he proceeded to stab Ms. Drolet, Mr. Donaghy stated that he noticed she had not died from the strangulation. He claims that he was not aware of what transpired during the murder, until he sat back against the wall and thought to himself, "Oh crap, I really did it now."

The Board raised its concern with the fact that Mr. Donaghy had pulled down Ms. Drolet's pants after she was already dead. Mr. Donaghy explained that, after he stabbed her to death, he still "did not feel satisfied" and wanted to humiliate her as she had done to him. Mr. Donaghy stated that although the act was not "sexually motivated," he recognizes that his crime had a sexual element that justified the Board's recommendation (at an earlier hearing) that he partake in Sex Offender Treatment. At this hearing, the Board noted that Mr. Donaghy completed the Sex Offender Treatment Program in 2018, and participated in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Anger Management, AA/NA, Restorative Justice, and the Graduate Maintenance Program. Mr. Donaghy has also maintained employment as a worker in the clothing department at MCI-Norfolk.

Though he acknowledged the influence that his drug addiction had on his crime, Mr. Donaghy attributed its commission to his anger and control issues. He told the Board, however, that the Anger Management program has helped him recognize his triggers and understand that he, alone, is responsible for his reactions to others. Mr. Donaghy recognizes that it is possible for him to have another "bad day," but states that he works very hard not to. Instead, he relies on his sobriety and the support of his family to improve himself. He told the Board that, if released, he would "do anything" for work after a gradual transition back into society.

The Board considered the written submission in opposition to parole from Ms. Drolet's sister.

## **III. DECISION**

It is the opinion of the Board that Mr. Donaghy has not yet demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. He is encouraged to continue to engage in the maintenance portion of the Sex Offender Treatment

Program as outlined in the Treatment Review Panel review. Mr. Donaghy should continue to identify the risks and struggles he may face upon release, as well as develop a strong release and relapse prevention plan.

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. The Board also considered a risk and needs assessment, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Donaghy's risk of recidivism. The Board considered Mr. Donaghy's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Donaghy's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Gary Donaghy is not rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Donaghy's next appearance before the Board will take place in four years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Donaghy 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.*

  
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Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

  
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Date