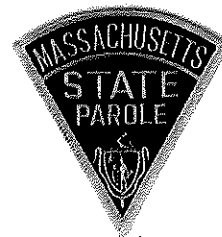




*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*



**PAROLE BOARD**

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*Chairman*

**Gloriann Moroney**  
*Executive Director  
General Counsel*

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**GARY GOVAN**

**W86581**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Initial Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** November 16, 2017

**DATE OF DECISION:** October 18, 2018

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe,

**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.<sup>1</sup> Parole is denied with a review scheduled in three years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On November 16, 2005, in Suffolk Superior Court, Gary Govan pleaded guilty to second degree murder for the killing of Tracy Fletcher and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On the night of December 31, 2002, Gary Govan (age 48) had an argument with his girlfriend, Tracy Fletcher, in the apartment they shared in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. Mr. Govan armed himself with a knife and stated, in front of witnesses, that he was going to kill Ms. Fletcher. Mr. Govan then chased Ms. Fletcher into the street, threw her to the ground, and repeatedly stabbed her to death in front of onlookers. Witnesses then tackled Mr. Govan, detaining him until police arrived.

<sup>1</sup> One Board Member voted to deny parole with a review in four years.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON NOVEMBER 16, 2017**

On November 16, 2017, Gary Govan, now 63-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for his initial hearing. He was not represented by counsel. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Govan apologized to Ms. Fletcher's family and expressed his remorse for the crime. The Board questioned Mr. Govan as to whether anything in his childhood had contributed to his violent behavior. Mr. Govan explained how hard it was, as an African American child, to move to South Boston in the 1960's. Racially motivated attacks on him and his family caused him to drop out of school. He subsequently abused alcohol and drugs at an early age. When Board Members asked if his previous relationships were abusive, Mr. Govan stated that all 6 of his relationships were verbally abusive, but none involved physical violence. Mr. Govan told the Board that substance abuse was a big factor in his abusiveness.

When the Board questioned Mr. Govan about the murder of Ms. Fletcher, he stated that he was jealous and suspicious of her. On the night of the murder, Mr. Govan said he had been drinking heavily and smoking crack cocaine. At some point during the evening, Mr. Govan told Ms. Fletcher, "You better not be sleeping with so and so." When Ms. Fletcher said she was sleeping with someone, Mr. Govan said that he exploded. He chased her onto the street with a knife and stabbed her to death. Mr. Govan told the Board that this was the first time he had talked about his crime since being incarcerated. It was painful, but he felt it was important for Ms. Fletcher's family to hear.

When the Board asked Mr. Govan about his institutional record, he said he has been sober since 2002 and has never had a disciplinary report. Mr. Govan said that he works as a houseman. He obtained his G.E.D. in 2007 and, in 2014, started going to Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. He said he completed Alternatives to Violence and Jericho Circle and is on the waiting list for Emotional Awareness. When the Board suggested he attend the Correctional Recovery Academy (C.R.A.), Mr. Govan said that he had tried to enroll, but was denied because he was considered low risk. If paroled, Mr. Govan requests that he be sent to a lower security prison first, and then to a pre-release facility, followed by a sober house. He would continue to participate in Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Mr. Govan told the Board that he has strong support in the community from family and friends and hopes to find work as a mechanic.

Mr. Govan's family and friends sent letters and testified in support of parole. Ms. Fletcher's family sent letters and testified in opposition to parole. The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office sent a letter in opposition to parole.

## **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Gary Govan has not yet demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Govan is on the right path and should continue to invest in his rehabilitation. Mr. Govan acknowledged that, during his hearing, it was the first time he disclosed his full culpability as it relates to the governing offense.

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

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gloriann Moroney, Executive Director/General Counsel

10/18/18  
Date