



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety

PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

GEORGE CAMERON

W35886

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: April 10, 2012

DATE OF DECISION: September 28, 2012

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Cesar Archilla, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sheila Dupre, Ina Howard-Hogan, Roger Michel, Lucy Soto-Abbe, Josh Wall.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, institutional record, the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the Board, we conclude by a unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole at this time. Parole is denied with a review in five years.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On December 2, 1976, in Worcester Superior Court, Mr. Cameron was found guilty following a jury trial of six counts of second degree murder for which he received six concurrent life sentences. He was also convicted of two counts of arson which resulted in concurrent 10 to 15 year sentences. The arson sentences were from and after the life sentences. The victims of these offenses were Lisa Grandmaison age 8, John Grandmaison age 5, Daniel Grandmaison age 3, Christine Grandmaison age 10, their mother, Florence Grandmaison age 31, and Colleen McCarthy age 16.

On April 2, 1976, George Cameron, assisted by Michael Moody, set a fire that resulted in the deaths of six people. Mr. Moody pled guilty to arson, cooperated with the prosecution of Mr. Cameron, and received a five-year sentence. Mr. Cameron admitted at his 2007 parole hearing that he was obsessed with two of the occupants of the building, Colleen McCarthy and

her sister, Kathleen. He described his obsession in terms of lust for the two young women. Mr. Cameron said that if he couldn't have the young girls, nobody would.

John Grandmaison, a survivor, lost his entire family to the fire: his wife, who was eight months pregnant, and three of his children perished that night, while his daughter Lisa died two months later at the Shriner's Hospital in Boston. Colleen McCarthy tried to make her way to the fourth floor to help the Grandmaison family. She died while trying to save them.

Examination of the fire scene revealed that the fire originated on the first floor rear porch. The fire quickly raged out of control, shooting up the rear porches of each floor to the top of the four story building. The McCarthy family lived on the third floor and the Grandmaison family lived on the fourth floor.

George Cameron and Michael Moody each blamed the other when they were arrested and interviewed two weeks after the fire. It was undisputed that George Cameron called 911 soon after the fire started and was tape-recorded reporting the fire "I just lit."

II. INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

George Cameron was a violent and dangerous inmate during the first 13 years of his sentence. He was caught with a weapon six different times. He was caught fighting with another inmate six different times. He was also disciplined for assaulting staff, possessing homebrew, and engaging in sexual activity with another inmate. He was caught trying to escape in 1987. In 1988 he did escape in an incident that resulted in a criminal conviction with a one-year commitment from and after the life sentences.

He was returned to higher security several times and sent to out of state placements in New Hampshire and Rhode Island from 1992 to 1998. Mr. Cameron's conduct has improved significantly since 1991, the last documented report occurred in June of 2008 for the use of obscene, abusive and insolent language.

Since his last parole hearing in April 2007, he has participated in pre-GED, Alternatives to Violence, and Smart Recovery. Currently, Mr. Cameron is not engaged in any programming to address his causative factors as he says he does not have any issues. Mr. Cameron has maintained steady employment since 2000 and currently works in the kitchen.

III. PAROLE HISTORY

On April 10, 2012, George Cameron appeared before the Massachusetts Parole Board for a Review Hearing. This is Mr. Cameron's sixth appearance before the Board beginning in 1991; all previous petitions have been denied. At his last hearing in 2007, Mr. Cameron admitted he set the fire because he was obsessed with Colleen McCarthy and her sister. In its 2007 decision the Board noted that Mr. Cameron for the first time took responsibility for the fire. At this hearing, Mr. Cameron disavowed his 2007 admissions and reverted to his previous story that he had no responsibility for the fire.

Mr. Cameron said he "barely knew Colleen and I didn't set the fire." He said he went with Mr. Moody to the building because Mr. Moody wanted to visit someone; he stayed outside while Mr. Moody went inside; he noticed fire after Mr. Moody came out; he went to call the fire department and when he returned to the burning building, Mr. Moody was gone. He denied that at his 2007 hearing he admitted he set the fire.

The inmate was involved in a fire at a school as a teen in 1971 for which he received a suspended DYS commitment for arson. At his parole hearing, he made contradictory statements about his role. He appeared to take responsibility for that fire when he said, "I did light that fire." Later in the hearing, however, he denied any intentional act and said, "I was sitting next to a curtain smoking a cigarette and the curtain went up accidentally." Michael Moody was a co-defendant in this case.

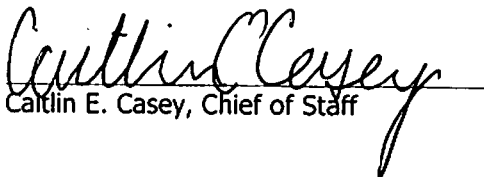
In addition, in 1970 as a juvenile, Mr. Cameron received probation for breaking and entering with the intent to burn a building. Mr. Cameron and his friend broke into a house. They were caught in the house and the friend admitted that Mr. Cameron brought matches with the intent to start a fire in the house.

The inmate's sister and niece spoke in support of parole. John Grandmaison and Candy Grandmaison (who survived the fire but lost her mother and four siblings) submitted letters in opposition to parole. Worcester Assistant District Attorney Steven Carley spoke in opposition to parole.

IV. DECISION

George Cameron set a fire that killed six people. In 2007 he admitted the crime and revealed his twisted and delusional motive. At his 2012 hearing he denied he set the fire and denied that he made admissions and explanations in 2007. Because of his criminal conduct and his recent history of contradictory testimony before the Parole Board, Mr. Cameron does not present a serious petition for parole. Mr. Cameron shows no sign of rehabilitation. Consequently he remains a risk to re-offend and parole is incompatible with the welfare of society. Accordingly, parole is denied with a review in five years.

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing.


Caitlin E. Casey, Chief of Staff

9/28/12
Date