The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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PAROLE BOARD
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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

GEORGE STALLINGS
W68184

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **September 14, 2023**

DATE OF DECISION: **December 13, 2023**

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

VOTE: Parole is granted, after six months in lower security, to CRJ or long-term residential program, but not before District Attorney clearance.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On June 6, 2000, in Suffolk Superior Court, George Stallings pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of Rufus Thomas and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Parole was denied following his initial hearing in 2013 and review hearing in 2018. He postponed his 2022 hearing. Mr. Stallings, 50 years old, appeared before the Board on September 14, 2023 for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Deirdre Thurber. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Stallings' September 14, 2023 hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On September 11, 1998, the body of Rufus Thomas (age 35) was found by Boston police officers in his apartment in Dorchester. Mr. Thomas' body was found next to his bed, beneath a pile of clothing, with his hands and feet bound with an electric cord. He had been asphyxiated. A large kitchen knife was found on the bed. Several items of Mr. Thomas' jewelry (including three rings normally worn by him), as well as his credit cards, could not be located in the apartment. Several days later, Mr. Stallings (age 25) was arrested driving Mr. Thomas' missing motor vehicle in Manchester, New Hampshire. Mr. Stallings had keys to the car, as well the missing keys to Mr. Thomas' apartment. A few weeks prior, Mr. Stallings had cashed a check from Mr. Thomas' account in Boston and then again, in Manchester, New Hampshire. While in Manchester, Mr. Stallings confided in a friend to strangling a man in

Boston and then leaving him beneath a pile of clothes. Fingerprints in the apartment, and a DNA match to a bloodstain on the victim's bed, placed Mr. Stallings at the crime scene.

APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. In making this determination, the Board takes into consideration an inmate's institutional behavior, their participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize the inmate's risk of recidivism. M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. The Board also considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of the 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 and/or in written submissions to the Board (if applicable).

DECISION OF THE BOARD: This was Mr. Stallings' third appearance before the Board. Since his last hearing, he continued to pursue his rehabilitation by participating in Restorative Justice, GPMP, Pathways to Freedom, and the NEADS Program. Mr. Stallings also participated in a comprehensive forensic mental health evaluation with Dr. Frank DiCataldo that provided pertinent information regarding his mental health and substance abuse history, his progress in addressing his needs, and recommendations to assist him with maintaining his sobriety and stability in the community. While Mr. Stallings has reportedly been sober throughout his incarceration, he agrees that continued supportive services in the community are important in maintaining his sobriety. Mr. Stallings also demonstrated insight into the relationship between his adverse childhood experiences, lack of prior mental health services, and his criminal history. Since his incarceration, he has invested in mental health treatment and has been psychologically and behaviorally stable for many years. Mr. Stallings has a significant support system to assist him with re-entry needs, including assisting him with current medical needs. Mr. Stallings had three members of his family speaking in support of his parole. There was one member of the victim's family who spoke in opposition of parole. An Assistant District Attorney from Suffolk County took no position on parole suitability, provided Mr. Stallings' release plan included continued substance abuse and mental health treatment.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for program or at Parole Officer's discretion (has medical restrictions); Curfew: must be at home between 10PM and 6AM; Electronic monitoring; Must take prescribed medication; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with agency policy; Report to assigned MA parole office on day of release; No contact with victim's family; Must have mental health counseling for trauma history and substance abuse; Long-term residential program or CRJ for at least 90 days.

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

Tina M. Hurley, Chair

12/13/2023

Date