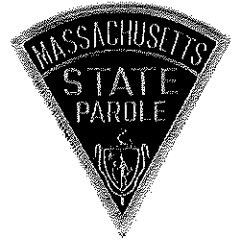




The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

GEORGE STALLINGS

W68184

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **September 25, 2018**

DATE OF DECISION: **September 5, 2019**

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

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.¹

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

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.

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

¹ One Board Member voted to deny parole with a 3 year review.

three rings normally worn by him), as well as his credit cards, could not be located in the apartment. On September 23, 1998, Mr. Stallings was arrested driving Mr. Thomas' missing motor vehicle in Manchester, New Hampshire. Mr. Stallings had keys to the car, as well as 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.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

Mr. Stallings, now 45-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on September 25, 2018, and was represented by Kaitlyn Gerber, a law student from the Harvard Legal Assistance Project. Mr. Stallings had been denied parole after his initial hearing in 2013. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Stallings acknowledged that his "actions have changed the Thomas family's life forever" and apologized for the resulting death of Mr. Thomas. Law Student Gerber provided an opening statement on behalf of Mr. Stallings, stating that he is "horrified and deeply remorseful of his crime," and that Mr. Stallings is "haunted by the pain that he has caused."

While discussing his personal history with the Board, Mr. Stallings said that he was diagnosed with depression between the ages of 13 and 14. Both his parents were involved with drugs, and his mother was incarcerated for a bank robbery when he was three-years-old. Mr. Stallings reported that he was physically abused by both his mother and stepfather, and that he was sexually abused by people he trusted. He also indicated to the Board that he had sexually assaulted a family member when he was a minor. Because of the abuse, he was confused about his sexuality and attempted suicide between 10 and 15 times. His most recent attempt occurred in 2010. Board Members questioned Mr. Stallings as to his mental health, since he made claims that he heard voices in his head (auditory hallucinations) as recently as two years ago. An evaluation in 2005 noted concerns that Mr. Stallings presents with several risk factors that are not related to any mental illness. Rather, the evaluator noted that Mr. Stallings' claims served as an excuse to manipulate and deceive. Mr. Stallings reports that he is prescribed two different medications and takes them on an "as needed" basis. He acknowledges, however, that he needs to work further in addressing issues related to his medications.

During the course of the hearing, Mr. Stallings discussed the crimes for which he is incarcerated. Mr. Stallings claimed that his motive was to rob Mr. Thomas, stating, "I just wanted more money." At the time of the offense, Mr. Stallings was reportedly earning \$4,000 a week selling heroin. In describing the events leading up to the murder, Mr. Stallings informed the Board that he did not know Mr. Thomas personally, but knew that he sold drugs and had a lot of

money. Mr. Stallings stated that he went to Mr. Thomas' apartment with a friend. After waiting quite some time in the living room by himself, Mr. Stallings went into the bedroom and, without hesitation, struck Mr. Thomas and demanded money. Mr. Stallings reports that his friend left the apartment. He then continued to assault Mr. Thomas with his fists and hit him over the head with a radio. When speaking of the assault, Mr. Stallings told the Board, "I was conscious of what I was doing." He tied Mr. Thomas' hands and feet with an extension cord and then left the victim's home with jewelry and money, but not before throwing a pile of clothes on top of him.

The Board questioned Mr. Stallings as to the underlying factors that contributed to his rage. Mr. Stallings called himself a coward for his senseless act, stating that his anger derived from Mr. Thomas' refusal to give him the money that he had been waiting for. Mr. Stallings denies experiencing that kind of rage since the day of the crime. At the time of the crime, however, it was noted that Mr. Stallings was on probation for assault and battery. Since his last hearing, Mr. Stallings graduated from the Residential Treatment Unit program, Spectrum General Population Maintenance program, and Alternative to Violence (ATV). He is scheduled for the advance course in ATV and is on the wait list for the Restorative Justice Program. Mr. Stallings also works as a unit runner. His last disciplinary report occurred in 2015. When the Board questioned him about attendance in AA, Mr. Stallings stated that he did not want to attend, claiming "it's not positive for me, sexual things occur in AA."

For his parole plan, Mr. Stallings asked to step down to minimum security, where he could apply to transitional housing programs. He reports that he has access to support in the community through the St. Francis House, Boston Release Network, and Sharing Circle Organization. Mr. Stallings also stated that he has the support of his cousin, father, and brothers. When questioned about a possible return to the community, however, Mr. Stallings expressed his fear of re-offending and returning to prison, noting that he would try not to participate in petty crimes.

The Board considered oral testimony from Mr. Stallings' father in support of parole. The Board received letters of support from Attorney Rosemary Scapicchio and Mr. Stallings' cousin. The Board considered letters of opposition from Mr. Thomas' eldest sibling and mother. The Board considered testimony and a letter from Suffolk County District Attorney Charles Bartoloni in opposition to parole. The Board also considered a letter of opposition from Boston Police Commissioner William Gross.

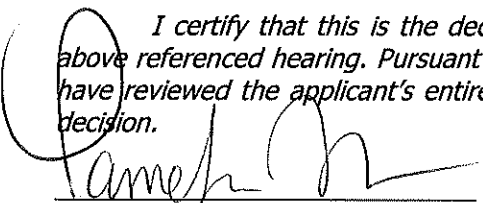
III. DECISION

It is the opinion of the Board that Mr. Stallings has yet to demonstrate a level of rehabilitative progress that would be compatible with the welfare of society. He should remain program compliant and disciplinary report free.

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

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

9/5/2019
Date