

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



PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

**HECTOR GONZALEZ
W44199**

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: May 6, 2021

DATE OF DECISION: November 17, 2021

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

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On November 16, 1987, in Hampden Superior Court, 40-year-old Hector Gonzalez pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of 30-year-old Sonia Torres. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, Mr. Gonzalez pleaded guilty to three counts of rape of a child with force, three counts of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14, and one count of assault with intent to rape a child under 16 for the repeated abuse of Ms. Torres' three daughters. He received sentences of 12 to 15 years on each of the rape counts and sentences of 8 to 10 years for the remaining counts. All sentences, including the life sentence, were ordered to run concurrently.

In the early 1980's, Hector Gonzalez lived in Springfield with his girlfriend, Sonia Torres, and her three daughters. For several years, Mr. Gonzalez committed sexual assaults, including multiple acts of rape, on the three girls. On February 2, 1986, Ms. Torres walked in on Mr.

Gonzalez when he was in the process of sexually assaulting her oldest daughter (age 14). After Ms. Torres reported the assault to police, her daughters left to stay with a relative at another location. On February 6, 1986, when Ms. Torres and her 11-year-old daughter returned to the apartment they shared with him to retrieve some belongings, Mr. Gonzalez was hiding in the apartment with a kitchen knife. He proceeded to stab Ms. Torres multiple times in the chest and then sliced her daughter twice on her hands. Ms. Torres succumbed to her injuries at Springfield Hospital a short time later. Mr. Gonzalez fled the apartment to New Jersey, where he was apprehended the following day.

After their mother's murder, Ms. Torres' daughters disclosed the extent of the sexual assaults perpetrated upon them by Mr. Gonzalez. The 14-year-old child reported that the assaults began with fondling when she was seven and then progressed to forced vaginal rape. The 12-year-old child reported that the sexual assaults began when she was seven and continued for five years, sometimes daily. Mr. Gonzalez beat the girls when they resisted and threatened to kill their mother if they told anyone. Mr. Gonzalez impregnated both girls, who subsequently gave birth and raised the children.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON MAY 6, 2021

Hector Gonzalez, now 74-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on May 6, 2021, for a review hearing. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Gonzalez was denied parole after his initial hearing in 2001, and after his review hearings in 2006, 2011, and 2016. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Gonzalez said that he completed the Sex Offender Treatment Program and now helps other similarly situated individuals. He also reported the completion of numerous classes at Bridgewater, including a class entitled "Roots of Aggression." Mr. Gonzalez acknowledged his hostility towards women and apologized for the crimes he committed. Mr. Gonzalez believes that an empathy class has helped him understand the harm he caused his victims.

In response to Board Member questioning, Mr. Gonzalez admitted that he sexually assaulted Ms. Torres' children over several years. Further, he admitted that Ms. Torres left their shared residence after discovering that he sexually assaulted one of her children. Mr. Gonzalez reported that he hid in the apartment, armed with a knife, on the day she returned to retrieve her belongings. Mr. Gonzalez denied that he wanted to kill Ms. Torres but stated that he was not in control of himself at the time of the murder. He further claimed to have no memory of cutting her child with a knife.

Mr. Gonzalez recently completed the Sex Offender Treatment Program and reported that he is engaged in the Sex Offender Treatment Maintenance program. In response to a Board Member's question, he acknowledged that he continues to address his deviant sexual interests. Mr. Gonzalez also referred to several courses he completed, including a course on empathy. When asked by Board Members to apply the concepts from the course to his victims' circumstances, Mr. Gonzalez gave short, general answers. Although he claimed to be sorry for his criminal actions that caused such suffering, Mr. Gonzalez was not able to expound in greater detail.

The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from the daughter of Ms. Torres. The Board also considered testimony in opposition to parole from Hampden County Assistant District Attorney Howard Safford.

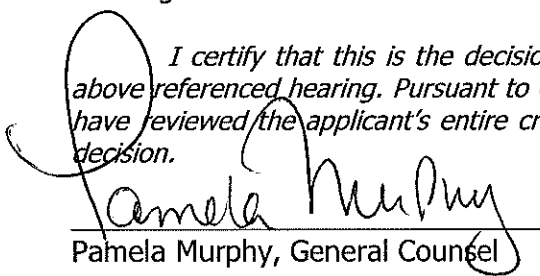
III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Hector Gonzalez has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Gonzalez was convicted of stabbing his girlfriend to death and sexually assaulting her three minor children over the course of many years, impregnating two of the children. After three decades, Mr. Gonzalez only recently completed the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP). However, he still lacks empathy and continues to minimize the impact on his victims. He presented as void of emotion and remorse. Mr. Gonzalez's concerning history of sexual offending dates back prior to the governing offenses. He is encouraged to continue to engage in SOTP Maintenance programming, Restorative Justice, or equivalent programming to address victim impact and empathy, as well as programming to address his hostility towards women.

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

Mr. Gonzalez'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. Gonzalez to continue working toward 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

11/17/2021
Date