



Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Daniel Bennett
Secretary

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

12 Mercer Road
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

Telephone # (508) 650-4500

Facsimile # (508) 650-4599



Paul M. Treseler
Chairman

Michael J. Callahan
Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

HUNG TRUONG

W52523

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: August 30, 2016

DATE OF DECISION: February 2, 2017

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 by unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole. Parole is denied with a review scheduled in three years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On May 13, 1992, in Middlesex County Superior Court, Hung Truong pled guilty to both the second-degree murders of Ngoc Le and Dixie Poulin and two armed robberies. For the second degree murders, Mr. Truong was sentenced to two concurrent life sentences with the possibility of parole. For the armed robberies, he was given two concurrent 9 to 10 year sentences, which were to run concurrent with the life sentences.¹

On November 21, 1989, 34-year-old Ngoc Le and her 15-year-old daughter, Dixie Poulin, were stabbed to death in their Everett apartment. Hung Truong (19-years-old) and Tam Bui (19-years-old) had broken into the apartment in order to rob Ms. Le. Mr. Truong and Mr. Bui were armed with a handgun and a knife and found Ms. Le alone. While Mr. Bui pointed the gun

¹ Mr. Truong's armed robbery sentences have now been deemed served.

at Ms. Le, Mr. Truong used the duct tape to gag her and bind her legs and arms. When Dixie Poulin came home and walked in on the crime, Mr. Truong took possession of the gun and used it to threaten her. He also used duct tape to gag the child and bind her arms and legs. After finding money and jewelry, the two men then stabbed Ms. Le and her daughter. Dixie Poulin was stabbed 12 times in the neck and chest. Six of the stab wounds to the neck perforated either her jugular vein or carotid artery. In addition, she had six lacerations to the head due to blunt force trauma. Ms. Le also suffered multiple stab wounds to her neck and chest.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON AUGUST 30, 2016

Hung Truong, now 46-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on August 30, 2016, for a review hearing. Mr. Truong was represented by Attorney Jeffrey Steinbrecher and was assisted by a Vietnamese interpreter with translation, when necessary. Mr. Truong was denied parole at his initial hearing in 2005. After his second parole hearing in 2010, Mr. Truong was paroled to an ICE detainer. However, because Vietnam does not accept its citizens for repatriation from the United States, he was released from ICE custody in January 2011 to begin parole supervision in Quincy. Mr. Truong was returned to custody in late 2011, and his parole was revoked following a positive drug test and his admission to taking cough medicine that contained codeine. Mr. Truong was denied parole at his review hearing in 2012.

In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Truong apologized for his crimes and acknowledged that his actions were cowardly and heartless. He apologized to the victims and their families, as well as to the community, and said that he was ashamed for returning on a parole violation. He said that he took the cough medicine without knowing what it was or reading the label. He also said that he was scared to tell his parole officer (or disclose at his last hearing) that he had been working "under the table" washing dishes prior to his revocation. He now understands that he must be a law abiding citizen when on parole. However, when asked to discuss the violent murders of the victims, Mr. Truong was not forthcoming in answering the Board's questions. He often provided short, one word answers to questions about the motive behind the robbery and murders, his role in the crimes, and his mindset at the time he stabbed and beat a 15-year-old girl to death.

The Board asked Mr. Truong about programs that he has participated in since his 2012 hearing. Mr. Truong said he participated in Alternative to Violence Programs, Paths to Freedom, Computer Skills, Health Awareness, Men's Work, and Buddhist retreats. He has been steadily employed as a clerk in the property department and said that programming and religious practices have allowed him to "gain awareness of how to stay out of trouble." When asked about his substance abuse issues, Mr. Truong told the Board he began drinking alcohol as a child (under the age of 10) and was drinking heavily by the time he was 15 or 16. He was intoxicated when he committed the murders and robbery in November 1989, but says he has not had a drink since the night before he was incarcerated - over 25 years ago. He told the Board that he does not currently have a drug or alcohol problem, and feels that he is not an addict. He did not participate in AA when he was on parole.

The Board acknowledged Mr. Truong's troubled upbringing as one of ten children born into poverty in Vietnam, as well as his subsequent violent lifestyle as a child removed from his family and sent to live in refugee camps in Southeast Asia, before being sent to the United States. The Board noted that, through no fault of his own, Mr. Truong has mostly known a life

of violence, addiction, and struggle, resulting in 32 disciplinary reports and two returns to higher custody in the first half of his incarceration. The Board questioned Mr. Truong about his plans, if granted another parole. He said he would live with his brother and sister-in-law (as he did when he was released on parole in 2010), but that he does not have any specific employment prospects. He needs a work visa to become legally employed and, if paroled, Mr. Truong's attorney said that he would help him secure a work visa. When asked what challenges he might face if re-paroled, Mr. Truong replied that he does not think he will face any challenges because he has been on parole once before. He also said that he would not need any support from the Parole Board, if granted parole.

Board Members expressed concern about Mr. Truong's lack of support from either his family or the community. The Board also expressed concern that Mr. Truong has not adequately addressed his past trauma in Vietnam and refugee camps, his alcohol addiction as a child, and his violent behavior when first incarcerated. The Board asked Mr. Truong how he planned to get the extensive help and support he needs if re-paroled, but Mr. Truong did not answer. His attorney spoke up on his behalf, but Mr. Truong provided no information to the Board.

The Board considered oral testimony in support of parole from a friend. In addition, Mr. Truong's brother and sister-in-law submitted letters to the Board. The Board also considered testimony from Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Crystal Lyons, who spoke in opposition to parole.

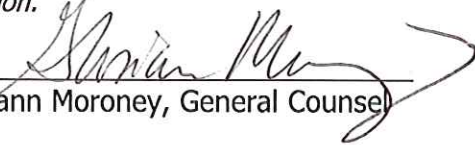
III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Truong has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. He needs a longer period of program participation and good conduct. He also needs to further address issues of honesty and trustworthiness and be able to construct a realistic parole plan.

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

Mr. Truong'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. Truong 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, General Counsel

2/2/17
Date