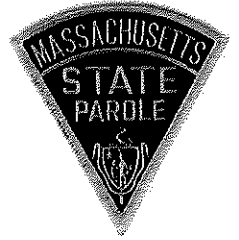




*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*



PAROLE BOARD

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Gloriann Moroney
Chair

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

HUNG TRUONG

W52523

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: November 15, 2018

DATE OF DECISION: September 19, 2019

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa, Lucy Soto-Abbe,¹ 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 three years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On May 13, 1992, in Middlesex County Superior Court, Hung Truong pleaded 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.²

¹ Board Member Soto-Abbe was no longer a Board Member at the time of vote.

² Mr. Truong's armed robbery sentences have now been deemed served.

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 (age 19) and Tam Bui (age 19) had broken into the apartment in order to rob Ms. Le. Mr. Truong and Mr. Bui, armed with a handgun and knife, found Ms. Le alone. While Mr. Bui pointed the gun 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 her head due to blunt force trauma. Ms. Le suffered multiple stab wounds to her neck and chest.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON NOVEMBER 15, 2018

Hung Truong, now 48-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on November 15, 2018, for a review hearing. Mr. Truong was represented by Northeastern Law School students Moira Barry and Natalie Ganem. He was assisted by a Vietnamese interpreter with translation, when necessary. Mr. Truong was denied parole after 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 revoked, following a positive drug test and an admission to taking cough medicine containing codeine. Mr. Truong was then denied parole after review hearings in 2012 and 2016. Although he was initially eligible for a review hearing in August 2019, Mr. Truong was granted an earlier review date pursuant to a settlement agreement in connection to a civil action between him and the Massachusetts Parole Board.

In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Truong expressed his remorse for the murders of Ms. Le and Ms. Poulin. He apologized to the victims and their family, and to the community at large, for the "suffering that [he] caused." Mr. Truong stated that his actions were "heartless and selfish," and that he "wish[es] that [he] could take back what [he] did." In addition, Mr. Truong apologized to the Board for his parole failure. Ms. Barry also gave an opening statement on Mr. Truong's behalf. During the hearing, Mr. Truong told the Board that prior to arriving in the United States, he spent time in refugee camps, where he witnessed a great deal of violence, such as stabbings and murders. Although he indicated that he was not a victim of violence during that time, Mr. Truong admitted to fighting. He also consumed alcohol and marijuana. When he arrived in the United States, Mr. Truong explained that his drinking began to escalate in an effort to "numb [his] feelings."

In describing the governing offense, Mr. Truong told the Board that he and his co-defendant, Tam Bui, agreed to participate together and, on the night of the murder, they played cards with Ms. Le. Mr. Truong indicated that he lost \$1,000 to Ms. Le during the card game, but that Mr. Bui lost more. Mr. Truong told the Board that he first reported this version in 2010 at his parole hearing. The Board pointed out that, although the Commonwealth's statement of the case indicates that Mr. Truong and his co-defendant knew that Ms. Le wore expensive jewelry and possessed large amounts of cash, there was no indication that she played cards with them.

Mr. Truong told the Board that Mr. Bui had the idea to go back to Ms. Le's house with food and beer, as a ruse to rob her of money and jewelry. When they arrived at Ms. Le's home, they asked her where the money was, but she wouldn't tell them. So, Mr. Truong tied up Ms. Le with duct tape and gagged her. At some point, however, Ms. Le's daughter arrived home. Mr. Truong then pointed a gun at her, telling her not to do anything. He tied her up and gagged her, as well. After Mr. Truong and Mr. Bui took jewelry and money, Mr. Bui discussed killing Ms. Le and her daughter. Mr. Truong said that he agreed, but denied that Mr. Bui showed him how to kill someone. Mr. Truong first stabbed Dixie Poulin, after beating her over the head with a gun. After Mr. Bui killed Ms. Le, he went to the location of Mr. Truong and asked him to leave the room. Mr. Bui then stabbed Ms. Poulin again. After killing them, the two men left and went to Mr. Truong's home, where they began drinking. Mr. Truong stated that at the time, he didn't feel anything because "violence was normal to [him]," having witnessed such violence as a teenager.

The Board also discussed Mr. Truong's time on parole supervision. Mr. Truong acknowledged that he was not forthcoming with the Board at his last hearing and admitted that, while on parole, he worked at a restaurant "under the table." He did not tell the Board, as he was afraid of getting in trouble. Mr. Truong explained that he began working approximately four months after his release and, prior to that, he babysat for his nephew. When Board Members questioned him about testing positive for drugs, Mr. Truong claimed that he took his sister-in-law's prescription cough medication when he was sick.

Mr. Truong told the Board that since his last hearing, he has participated in Alcoholics Anonymous ("AA") and has attended Buddhist retreats. He is also taking college business classes. Mr. Truong said that he completed Alternatives to Violence Programs ("AVP"), Computer Skills, and Health Awareness. When asked by Board Members as to the insight he gained through his programming efforts, Mr. Truong acknowledged that what he did was "horrible" and "something no one deserves." Mr. Truong believes that the crime he committed was due to the violence he experienced in the refugee camps and his lack of "respect for life." During that time, Mr. Truong stated that he associated with the "wrong crowd" and, when he arrived in the United States, continued to do so. When Board Members questioned him as to whether he received any counseling regarding his experience in the refugee camps, Mr. Truong indicated that he has not. He told the Board that he participates in group programs, but does not talk about his past experiences in detail. The Board noted the forensic mental health evaluation written by clinical psychology student Alexandra Adair. In discussing his parole plans, Mr. Truong indicated that, if not deported, he wishes to enter a long term residential program, as his immigration status prevents him from stepping down to lower security.

The Board considered oral testimony in support of parole from two friends. The Board also considered testimony from Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Emily Jackson, who spoke in opposition to parole. Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Adrienne Lynch submitted a letter of opposition.

III. DECISION

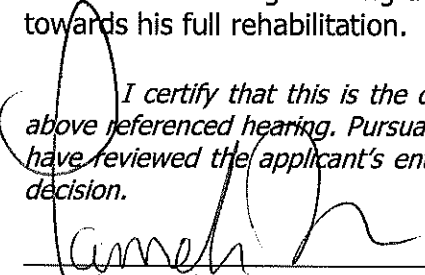
The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Truong has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Truong participated in a brutal double murder of a mother and her daughter. His versions of the offense continue to evolve. He must be forthright with the Board. Mr. Truong has yet to

demonstrate that he has benefited from participation in treatment and programming. He should address his prior trauma.

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 Hung 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.



Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

9/19/2019
Date