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Gloriann Moroney
Chair

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Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JAMES LEBLANC

W38597

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: September 24, 2020

DATE OF DECISION: July 13, 2021

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Karen McCarthy, 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 that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole. Parole is denied with a review scheduled in three years from the date of this hearing.¹

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On February 5, 1988, in Middlesex Superior Court, James LeBlanc pleaded guilty to armed robbery and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, Mr. LeBlanc also pleaded guilty to kidnapping and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. All sentences were to run concurrently with the life sentence. Additionally, on December 21, 1988, in Middlesex Superior Court, Mr. LeBlanc pleaded guilty to aggravated rape and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. The court ordered this second life sentence to run concurrently with his prior life sentence.

On April 9, 1990, in Plymouth Superior Court, Mr. LeBlanc pleaded guilty to escape and was sentenced to not more than five years, and not less than three years, in state prison. This sentence was to be served from and after his life sentence.

¹ One Board Member voted to deny parole with a review in two years.

In July 1985, Mr. LeBlanc was paroled from a state prison sentence of not more than seven years, and not less than four years, for breaking and entering and larceny. In October 1985, Mr. LeBlanc went whereabouts unknown, and his parole was revoked. Prior to his apprehension by police, however, Mr. LeBlanc went on a vicious crime spree and committed rape, robbery, and assault, for which he is currently incarcerated.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

James LeBlanc, now 60-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on September 24, 2020, and was represented by Attorney John Rull. He was denied parole after his initial hearing in 2015. In Mr. LeBlanc's opening statement to the Board, he expressed his disappointment in the Board's decision to deny him parole at his prior hearing. Mr. LeBlanc indicated that both his consistency in the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) and his physician evaluations were grounds for his release in 2015. He expressed remorse for his victims and apologized for causing them "unimaginable pain." Mr. LeBlanc characterized his crimes as "horrendous," stating that he wished his victims never "crossed paths" with him during the "most conflicted period of his life." Attorney Rull outlined Mr. LeBlanc's rehabilitative progress while incarcerated.

Board Members questioned Mr. LeBlanc as to his criminal history, noting that the governing offenses took place while he was on parole. When asked why he was unsuccessful on parole, Mr. LeBlanc indicated that the "pressure" was too much for him to handle. As such, he began drinking and using cocaine. Additionally, he continued to have sexually deviant thoughts. Mr. LeBlanc shared with the Board that he felt "insecure" and "angry" when a woman rejected a romantic relationship with him. When Board Members asked if he acted on that anger, Mr. LeBlanc stated, "I held it in." He denied committing additional sexual offenses, for which he was not convicted. Board Members, however, brought to his attention a 1988 report where he states that he did not know how many rapes he had "under his belt," since he was unable to control himself at the time. In response, Mr. LeBlanc claimed that he was misquoted. Rather, he was trying to articulate that, had he not been apprehended, he would have committed additional rapes. Upon questioning, Mr. LeBlanc also admitted to peeping, exposure, and voyeurism, as well as the theft of women's underwear. When Board Members inquired as to what precipitated the commission of multiple rapes, Mr. LeBlanc maintained that the rapes were not planned.

The Board discussed Mr. LeBlanc's SOTP participation, which he completed in 2015, and the insights he gained from the program. Mr. LeBlanc attributes his anger, coupled with his need for "power and control," as the causative factors of his sexual offenses. He told the Board his "anger" began to manifest towards women when he was rejected by "good, smart girls." When asked why he believes his anger escalated to rape, Mr. LeBlanc shared that he was "sexually humiliated" in seventh grade by female classmates. Around that time, he began exposing himself. He acknowledged a sense of control by committing such acts because he inflicted fear upon the victim. In addition, Mr. LeBlanc told the Board that he began to develop "deviant rape fantasies" at approximately 18 years old. In describing his fantasy, Mr. LeBlanc stated that "it felt good on some level that someone couldn't say no to me." He also described "rape roleplay scenarios" with past girlfriends.

Upon questioning, Mr. LeBlanc acknowledged that his thought process was so distorted that he believed his victims enjoyed the assault. He admitted that he could carry out his fantasy further, if he convinced himself that his victims "liked what was happening." While Mr. LeBlanc maintained that he never intended to physically harm his victims, he admitted to carrying and using weapons during the commission of his crimes. He indicated his fantasy was to "scare them into it" without committing violence. However, when his victims fought back, Mr. LeBlanc "lost control" of his anger, causing him to use additional force. Mr. LeBlanc stated that the weapons were a way to ensure control over his victims. When asked if he has addressed the concerns of the SOTP clinicians, Mr. LeBlanc answered in the affirmative. He told the Board that he has improved his self esteem and no longer harbors resentment towards women.

Board Members also questioned Mr. LeBlanc as to his programming efforts. Mr. LeBlanc admitted that he was unable to appreciate the impact of his crimes until he heard a victim speak at his initial hearing in 2015. Mr. LeBlanc stated that his actions "hurt [her] more than he could ever imagine." Mr. LeBlanc participated in Restorative Justice, as well as the Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA), for which he has become a program facilitator. He told the Board he plans to engage in the Sex Offender Maintenance Program when he is transferred back to the Treatment Center.

The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from the husband and friend of one of Mr. LeBlanc's rape victims. Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Taylor Makson provided testimony in opposition of parole, as well.

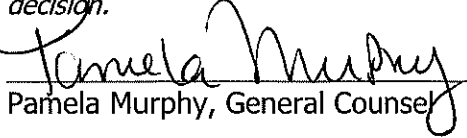
III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that James LeBlanc has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. LeBlanc is currently incarcerated for multiple sex offenses. Crimes were committed while on parole supervision within four months of release. Although he completed the Sex Offender Treatment Program, the Board encourages Mr. LeBlanc to re-engage in the Maintenance Program. Long history of sexual offenses. Mr. LeBlanc did not display empathy for his victims during the hearing. He also spoke of his need and continued desire to be in leadership roles and maintain control. Mr. LeBlanc is encouraged to present the Board with an updated Sex Offender evaluation to determine current risks and needs. Release does not meet the legal standard and [his release] remains incompatible with the welfare of society at this time.

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. LeBlanc'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. LeBlanc's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. LeBlanc's case, the Board is of the opinion that James LeBlanc does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. LeBlanc'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. LeBlanc 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

9/13/2021
Date