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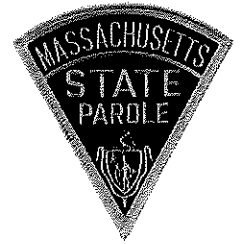
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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Tina M. Hurley
Chair

Daniel Nakamoto
Acting Executive Director

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JAMES SKINNER
W55739

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **September 28, 2023**

DATE OF DECISION: **January 9, 2024**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in three years from the date of the hearing.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On January 12, 1994, in Essex Superior Court, James Skinner pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of 62-year-old Americo Maldonado and was sentenced to serve life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same day, Mr. Skinner received a concurrent sentence of 12 to 20 years for armed assault in a dwelling. Mr. Skinner had two co-defendants, Elijah Kodjo and Kevin Bolding.

Parole was denied after an initial hearing in 2007, and after review hearings in 2012 and 2019. He postponed his review hearing in 2017. On September 28, 2023, James Skinner appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was not represented by counsel. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of James Skinner's September 28, 2023 hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: In the early morning hours of November 23, 1992, Kevin Bolding and Elijah Kodjo (James Skinner's adoptive brother) purchased drugs from Americo Maldonado's son in Lynn. At approximately 6:00 a.m., Mr. Skinner and his co-defendants decided to return to Mr. Maldonado's apartment in order to steal drugs and money. Mr. Bolding and Mr. Kodjo were armed with tire irons, and Mr. Skinner had a hunting knife. They forcibly entered Mr. Maldonado's apartment. Mr. Bolding and Mr. Kodjo assaulted and struggled with Mr. Maldonado's son. Meanwhile, Mr. Skinner stabbed Mr. Maldonado with the hunting knife. He

suffered several stab wounds, including a fatal wound to the chest that caused him to bleed to death. Mr. Skinner and his co-defendants took drugs and money and fled.

Mr. Bolding was arrested two days later, after Mr. Maldonado's son identified a photograph of him. Mr. Bolding's statement led to the arrest of Mr. Skinner. Mr. Kodjo made a statement inculcating Mr. Skinner. In addition, forensic evidence linked Mr. Skinner to the murder.

APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. In making this determination, the Board takes into consideration an inmate's institutional behavior, their participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize the inmate's risk of recidivism. M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. The Board also considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board (if applicable).

DECISION OF THE BOARD: This is Mr. Skinner's fourth appearance before the Board. He is currently housed at USP McCreary. He has been incarcerated since 1992. Mr. Skinner's early criminal history includes new crimes committed while on probation and parole. While incarcerated, he has a lengthy history of disciplinary reports. While he appears not to have incurred any disciplinary reports since October 2022, he also has not engaged in any programming. While Mr. Skinner indicated to the Board that he is unable to engage in programming, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons reports that he is eligible for programming; moreover, an individual needs plan has been created at the U.S. Bureau of Prisons for him. The Board recommends Mr. Skinner remain disciplinary report free and engage in programming.

The Board notes that Special Assistant District Attorney Elin Graydon of the Essex District Attorney's Office spoke in opposition.

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.


Tina M. Hurley, Chair

1/9/24
Date