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PAROLE BOARD

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Tina M. Hurley
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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JERMAINE CELESTER
W59247

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **November 16, 2023**

DATE OF DECISION: **February 26, 2024**

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

VOTE: Parole is granted on or after six months in lower security to C.R.J. Brooke House.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On September 14, 1995, after a jury trial in Plymouth Superior Court, Jermaine Celester was convicted of first-degree murder and armed assault with intent to murder. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole and a concurrent term of 15 to 20 years, respectively.

On appeal, the Supreme Judicial Court remanded the case to the Superior Court after which a new trial was ordered. On June 12, 2017, following a second jury trial, Jermaine Celester was convicted of second-degree murder in the death of Wakime Woods and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. He was acquitted of armed assault with intent to murder.

Mr. Celester appeared before the Parole Board for an initial hearing on November 29, 2022, and was denied parole. At his review hearing on November 16, 2023, he was represented by Northeastern University School of Law student attorneys Anna Caliandro and Yashna Eswaran, under the supervision of Attorney Patricia Garin. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Mr. Celester's November 16, 2023 hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On February 18, 1994, in Brockton, 21-year-old Jermaine Celester shot two individuals. He shot and killed 19-year-old Wakime Woods. Mr. Celester also shot a second 19-year-old individual, who survived, but was paralyzed. The victims were shot

near the corner of Green and Newbury Streets in Brockton. The Commonwealth's theory of the case was that Mr. Celester shot both young men because he was seeking revenge for the murder (approximately four months earlier) of his good friend Robert Moses and believed that the victims were refusing to reveal the identity of the murderer.

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 incarcerated individual'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 their 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 incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the incarcerated individual'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: Mr. Celester presented for the second time before the Board. Mr. Celester accepted the recommendations provided by the Board and has advanced his rehabilitative progress. Specifically, Mr. Celester has gained insight into the harm he has caused the victim's family and his community through his criminal lifestyle. Mr. Celester engaged in Restorative Justice and Men's Work since his last hearing. Mr. Celester has been incarcerated for 30 years and has remained sober throughout his incarceration. Mr. Celester has a strong support system and release plan. The Board considered his age at the time of offense as relevant to his criminal behavior. In light of his age, years spent in prison, and re-entry needs, the Board is of the opinion that a period of transition in lower security will assist with acclimating to the community.

The Board concludes that Jermaine Celester has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.¹

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for two weeks; Must be home between 10 pm and 6 am or at Parole Officer's discretion; Electronic Monitoring at Parole Officer's discretion; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with Agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with Agency policy; Report to assigned Massachusetts Parole Office on day of release; No contact with victim(s)' family; Must have substance abuse evaluation and must follow recommendations; Must have mental health counseling for transitional issues; Residential Program CRJ – Brooke House for at least 90 days.

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

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


Date