



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JESSE ROGERS
W56017

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **July 13, 2023**

DATE OF DECISION: **November 30, 2023**

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

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On March 7, 1994, in Suffolk Superior Court, Jesse Rogers pleaded guilty to two counts of second-degree murder in the deaths of 77-year-old Alba Pellegrini and 32-year-old John Ward, Jr. He was sentenced to two concurrent terms of life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On September 10, 1991, Mr. Rogers went to the Dorchester home of 77-year-old Alba Pellegrini, where she lived with her 32-year-old grandson, John Ward, Jr., and viciously beat and stabbed them both to death. Mr. Rogers was 30 years old at the time. Ms. Pellegrini had been the caretaker of her grandson, who had suffered from the effects of cerebral palsy since birth. Mr. Ward was confined to a bed, a chair in the kitchen, or a wheelchair. In the summer of 1991, she became unable to provide for all of Mr. Ward's care by herself. In August 1991, she requested the assistance of a home health aide from the Boston Visiting Nurses Association. Mr. Rogers was assigned the case of Mr. Ward.

On or about August 19, 1991, Ms. Pellegrini complained to the Visiting Nurses Association that Mr. Rogers had failed to appear on evening visits, forcing her to return Mr. Ward to bed by herself. Mr. Rogers was subsequently removed from the case. On September 9, 1991, however, Mr. Rogers appeared at the Pellegrini home, falsely claiming that he had been sent to provide "therapy" for Mr. Ward. Ms. Pellegrini's sister visited that afternoon and became suspicious, noting that Mr. Rogers appeared intent on not leaving until she left. When Ms. Pellegrini's sister told him she was staying the night, Mr. Rogers finally left. The following day, Mr. Rogers returned

to the Pellegrini home with the intent to steal. Ms. Pellegrini's other sister would later report that, while speaking with Ms. Pellegrini on the phone, she heard her sister say to the person at the door, "It's Jesse" and then say, "What are you doing here, you know you're supposed to call before you come." Following the conversation, family members could not reach Ms. Pellegrini at her home. After several failed attempts to reach Ms. Pellegrini, relatives and a friend went to her house and discovered the bodies of Ms. Pellegrini and Mr. Ward on a bed covered with blood.

Mr. Rogers had viciously attacked Ms. Pellegrini by striking her six times in the head and face with a tea kettle and stabbing her three times in the chest (reaching her heart) and once in her neck. The medical examiner opined that she did not die immediately. Mr. Rogers violently attacked Mr. Ward, as well, striking him numerous times on the forehead and face with the same tea kettle and stabbing him several times in his chest and neck. Mr. Ward appeared to have fought for his life, as he had defensive wounds on both his arm and hand. The medical examiner concluded that Mr. Ward had also lived for a period of time before expiring.

Following the crime, Mr. Rogers was interviewed on three occasions. He repeatedly lied to the police, at times providing false and different alibis. In September 1992, he was arrested for the governing offenses.

PAROLE HEARING: Mr. Rogers appeared before the Board for a review hearing on July 13, 2023. He was represented by Attorney Chetan Tiwari. Mr. Rogers was denied parole after his initial hearing in 2007, and after review hearings in 2012, 2017, and 2022. The entire video recording of Mr. Rogers' July 13, 2023 hearing is fully incorporated by reference into the Board's decision.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: 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.

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 at this time. Parole is denied with a review scheduled in two years from the date of the hearing.

In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Rogers' 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. Rogers' risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Rogers' case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Mr. Rogers is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Rogers has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. At the hearing, the subject discussed his history of anger issues and substance use. He specifically discussed a 2022 incident where he acknowledged getting upset and saying things he should not have. Subject indicated that, if he started using alcohol or drugs again, then there would be concerns with him being in the community. Having only recently admitted to his crime, subject has not demonstrated sufficient insight into his crime. At the hearing, he recognized that he had named another as the

perpetrator, and the Board notes that he is beginning to show insight into what that meant, especially where he had previously denied his culpability to even his closest supports.

Subject has a history of 31 disciplinary reports, including multiple assaultive events. His criminal history shows a pattern of property crimes, which he indicated was a factor in the murders of two vulnerable victims. The Board acknowledges the report of Dr. DiCataldo and subject's cognitive limitations. While subject had supporters present, none spoke in support of parole. Two members of the victims' family and Assistant District Attorney Haywood spoke in strong opposition. The Board notes that the subject needs further programs addressing victim empathy, especially in light of the fact that the victims were elderly and disabled, respectively, and he was their caregiver.

Mr. Rogers' next appearance before the Board will take place in two years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Rogers to continue working toward 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.



Tina M. Hurley, Chair

11/30/2023

Date