



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



PAROLE BOARD

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Gloriann Moroney
Chair
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Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JESUS SIERRA

W54612

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **February 8, 2022**

DATE OF DECISION: **October 3, 2022**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa¹

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 June 9, 1993, in Suffolk Superior Court, Jesus Sierra pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of his girlfriend, 34-year-old Santa Montanez. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Mr. Sierra was 26-years-old at the time of the murder.

On March 7, 1992, Jesus Sierra stabbed Santa Montanez numerous times and strangled her to death. Mr. Sierra and Ms. Montanez had been dating for less than a year when he moved into her third-floor apartment in Dorchester, where she lived with her 11-year-old daughter. On the night of the murder, Mr. Sierra arrived home from work around midnight. Around 12:40 a.m., Ms. Montanez's sister, who lived on the second floor, heard screaming in her sister's apartment upstairs. Ms. Montanez's other sister, who lived on the first floor, joined her sister and her husband in checking on Ms. Montanez. They proceeded to the third floor and

¹ Chair Moroney was recused.

entered the apartment. They went to the locked bedroom door and called out, asking if everything was okay. After Mr. Sierra responded that everything was fine, they returned to their respective apartments. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Sierra left the house.

When Ms. Montanez's sisters returned to the third floor to check on her, they found that she had been strangled with an extension cord and stabbed numerous times with a small knife. Ms. Montanez was rushed to Boston City Hospital, where she was pronounced dead. The cause of death was determined to be asphyxia and strangulation from a ligature. Ms. Montanez's 11-year-old daughter was asleep when Mr. Sierra murdered her mother. The next day, Mr. Sierra turned himself in to police and admitted to the crime.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON FEBRUARY 8, 2022²

Jesus Sierra, now 56-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on February 8, 2022. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Sierra was denied parole after his initial hearing in 2007, and after his review hearings in 2012 and 2017. In Mr. Sierra's opening statement to the Board, he apologized to the family of Ms. Montanez for the pain he caused them. Mr. Sierra stated that, on several occasions, he attempted to take his own life because of the pain he caused. Mr. Sierra stated that he grew up in the Dominican Republic in a large family with many brothers and sisters. Prior to his relationship with Ms. Montanez, he had a few relationships with women that produced children. Mr. Sierra denied any instances of domestic violence in those relationships or in his relationship with Ms. Montanez. He stated that he has always been respectful towards women since he has three sisters and two daughters.

When Board Members questioned him as to the events leading up to the governing offense, Mr. Sierra stated that, on March 7, 1992, he returned home after socializing after work. He found Ms. Montanez on the phone in their bedroom, talking to a male about leaving him. Mr. Sierra stated that he was drunk and high on cocaine that day, causing him to become extremely angry and violent over what he perceived to be Ms. Montanez's infidelity.irate, he went into the bedroom and confronted her. The situation spiraled out of control, and he stabbed Ms. Montanez repeatedly with a small knife. Mr. Sierra claimed, however, that he has no memory of strangling Ms. Montanez with an electrical extension cord. He left the apartment, but later turned himself in and confessed to the murder. When pressed by the Board, Mr. Sierra could not explain why he committed such a brutal attack. He denied a history of violence, claiming only that drugs and alcohol caused him to lose control. Since the murder, Mr. Sierra stated that he has suffered from depression and receives mental health counseling. He is not currently on medication.

The Board noted that Mr. Sierra has taken several programs during his incarceration, except for a recommended program - English as a Second Language. Mr. Sierra stated that he has learning difficulties, making this type of class difficult for him. Additionally, Mr. Sierra confirmed that he has incurred 86 disciplinary reports during his incarceration. He explained that several disciplinary incidents involved his interpretation of institutional rules, which differed from those of the correction officers. When Board Members questioned him about an assault on a correction officer, Mr. Sierra maintained that his anger played a role, along with his

² The entire video recording of Mr. Sierra's February 8, 2022 hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

inability to recognize the correction officer's position. Mr. Sierra stated that, while he has attended Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, he mostly deals with anger issues "on his own."

Ms. Montanez's sister testified in opposition to parole. A member of the Victim Services Unit read into the record a statement in opposition to parole from Ms. Montanez's daughter. The Board also considered a letter in opposition to parole from the Boston Police Department.

III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Jesus Sierra has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. In 1992, Mr. Sierra strangled and stabbed 34-year-old Santa Montanez to death, while her 11-year-old daughter lay in bed with her. He has a history of 86 d[isciplinary] reports, as recently as 2021, and including one in 2020 for inciting a riot. While Mr. Sierra has improved his conduct and program participation, he maintains that he does not have a history of domestic violence, contrary to credible testimony that he had abused the victim. The Board is also concerned about Mr. Sierra's lack of substance abuse treatment in light of his statement that he would not have committed the offense if he had not been using drugs. The Board encourages him to engage in meaningful treatment that will address both domestic violence and addiction.

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. Sierra'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. Sierra's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Sierra's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Jesus Sierra is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Sierra'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. Sierra 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.

/s/ Pamela Murphy 
Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

10/3/22
Date