

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**JOHN TAMMARO  
W40009**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** July 30, 2019

**DATE OF DECISION:** April 23, 2020

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Karen McCarthy, Gloriann Moroney, 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 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 October 12, 1983, in Norfolk Superior Court, John Tammaro pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of 20-year-old Leslie Ann Haynes. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he pleaded guilty to one count of carrying a firearm without a license and received a concurrent sentence of 3 to 5 years.

John Tammaro (age 21) and Leslie Ann Haynes broke up in the late fall of 1982, after dating for a few months. Earlier that fall, Mr. Tammaro made two uninvited and unannounced visits to Ms. Haynes at her college in Colorado. When she returned home for the holiday break, Ms. Haynes told Mr. Tammaro that neither she, nor her parents, wanted her to see him anymore. Despite the breakup, Mr. Tammaro continued to call her. He also tried to see her by going to her work place and, on at least one occasion, waited for her in the bushes at her house when she went out at night with friends.

On December 18, 1982, Ms. Haynes drove into Boston with her friend for a Christmas party. Ms. Haynes, her friend, and a group of people stayed out at restaurants until closing (around 2:00 a.m. on December 19). Ms. Haynes dropped her friend off at her Cohasset home at around 2:50 a.m., before continuing to her own home about two miles away. Meanwhile, at some point after midnight on December 19, Mr. Tammaro took a bus from the Quincy MBTA station to Hingham and then hitchhiked to Cohasset. When a man picked him up and drove him to Ms. Haynes' street in Cohasset, Mr. Tammaro said, "There's the house I want, that's where my girlfriend lives and I have been having troubles." He further stated that he had a fight with his girlfriend, and that he wanted to make up with her. Mr. Tammaro also admitted that he had waited for her one night, by staying in one of the cars in their driveway. At about 1:30 a.m., the man dropped Mr. Tammaro at Ms. Haynes' home and left the area.

Mr. Tammaro waited outside until Ms. Haynes arrived home at around 3:00 a.m. He got into the back seat of her car and told her to drive. They eventually stopped at the Texaco gas station on South Main Street, where Mr. Tammaro shot her four times in the head and once in the arm. Mr. Tammaro left the gun at the gas station and proceeded down the street to another man's house. He convinced the man to give him a ride to Boston for some money. On the way, Mr. Tammaro told him that he had encountered a problem that night, and that the man would be able to read about it in the newspapers. At about 4:30 a.m., a Cohasset police officer noticed Ms. Haynes' vehicle parked at the Texaco gas station and discovered her body. She was transported to the hospital, where she was pronounced dead due to multiple gunshot wounds to the head.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JULY 30, 2019**

John Tammaro, now 58-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on July 30, 2019, for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney John Rull. Mr. Tammaro was denied parole after his initial hearing in 1997. He was granted parole after his 2002 review hearing and released from custody in 2005. His parole, however, was revoked in 2008. Mr. Tammaro was denied parole at review hearings in 2008 and 2013. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Tammaro apologized to Ms. Haynes' family and friends for the pain he caused by his "senseless act of violence." He stated that he has lived with "nonstop guilt and shame" since the murder.

When the Board questioned him about his life before the murder, Mr. Tammaro explained that he had endured an "extremely lonely and empty childhood," despite belonging to a large family. He had been a "depressed" young boy, who sought out loving relationships in order to feel cared for. He believed that this trait caused him to be controlling in romantic relationships. Mr. Tammaro told the Board that, before he met Ms. Haynes, he had been on probation for punching a girlfriend in the face (in public) on suspicion that she was unfaithful to him. He also admitted to throwing a bottle at a different girlfriend in California, although he was never charged with that offense.

Mr. Tammaro told the Board that Ms. Haynes was a wonderful person, and that they had enjoyed a happy relationship that summer before she moved to Colorado for college. The Board noted, however, that Mr. Tammaro did not tell Ms. Haynes that he was on probation for a domestic violence incident when they met. Board Members discussed with Mr. Tammaro, at length, as to when the romantic relationship between them ended. Mr. Tammaro insisted that they were still happily involved in the fall, even during his two unannounced visits to Colorado. Mr. Tammaro claimed that Ms. Haynes thought "at least the first" of the two visits had been

"romantic." The Board struggled with this characterization, as it conflicted with the accounts of others known to Ms. Haynes at the time.

Mr. Tamaro agreed with the Board that Ms. Haynes eventually ended the relationship, although he maintained that she did so when she returned to Massachusetts for winter break. Mr. Tamaro acknowledged that after the break up, he showed up unannounced at Ms. Haynes' work and home, including "tailing" her when she was out with friends one evening. According to Mr. Tamaro, he decided he was going to end his life a couple of days before the murder. He purchased a gun a few hours before he traveled to Cohasset, where he would lie in wait until Ms. Haynes returned home. The Board noted that he waited outside her home, in the cold, for approximately an hour and a half before he entered her car. At which point, he instructed her to drive to a gas station, where he shot her in the head, killing her. The Board struggled with Mr. Tamaro's description of Ms. Haynes' demeanor (at this time) as calm and agreeable, and suggested that she was, instead, terrified of him. Mr. Tamaro stated that after years of reflection, he agreed that she must have been terrified, although he did not believe that at the time. The Board confronted Mr. Tamaro with the reality that he had plenty of opportunity to take his own life without involving Ms. Haynes. He said that he felt "betrayed" and "hopeless" because of their breakup, and that he "wanted her to feel his pain."

The Board discussed Mr. Tamaro's adjustment in the community during his parole supervision from 2005 to 2008. Mr. Tamaro worked a multitude of jobs during his parole release and completed the Emerge program. He engaged in a few romantic relationships with women, which he described as healthy and "normal." Of concern to the Board was Mr. Tamaro's behavior toward young women, who were clients at the gym where he worked. He agreed that accessing the personal information of a client through the gym's database, in order to ask her out on a date, was "unprofessional" and "inappropriate." He denied following a second gym patron after seeing her on the street one night. He claimed that he continued to look for her after she "disappeared," as he was concerned she may have fallen. He believed that their conversation, during which he had asked her on a date, was friendly, and he could not understand why a person had reported that he had made her feel uncomfortable. He also disagreed with this person's account that he had asked her out multiple times. Mr. Tamaro chalked these instances up to his "inexperience" in the outside world, believing that this type of behavior was part of his outgoing personality.

The Board asked Mr. Tamaro if he recognized a pattern in his pursuit of women, while on parole, that mirrored his pursuit of Ms. Haynes, both before and after their breakup. He denied that any such pattern existed. He cited the counseling he received in and out of prison, as well as his multiple programming efforts, including Emerge, as changing his batterer behavior and way of thinking. The Board noted that since his last hearing, Mr. Tamaro has completed dozens of programs, including multiple Restorative Justice retreats. The Board further acknowledged that his institutional adjustment has been positive, as Mr. Tamaro achieved his bachelor's degree and maintained fulltime employment. The Board told Mr. Tamaro, however, that although his personal counselor did not find his behavior toward women concerning, Board Members worried that his self-reporting may not be consistent with reality. In discussing this, the Board raised the concerns of the Emerge program staff, who believed that Mr. Tamaro had significant work to do regarding remorse, empathy, and honesty, as well as his manipulative and controlling behavior toward women. Mr. Tamaro took exception to the Emerge program's

assessment, stating that "they graduated me." He believes that he could have shared more with program staff about his rehabilitation, so that they had a fuller picture of how far he had come.

Mr. Tammaro's mother and two family friends testified in support of parole. Dr. Frank Dicataldo testified and submitted an evaluation on Mr. Tammaro's behalf. Ms. Haynes' sister and niece testified in opposition to parole. Norfolk Assistant District Attorney Michael McGee testified in opposition to parole. The Board considered additional letters in support of, and in opposition to, parole.

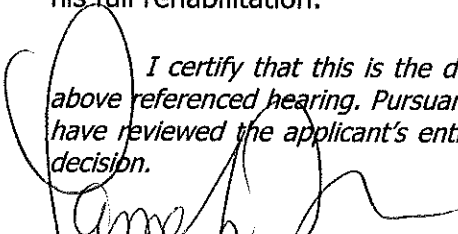
**III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that John Tammaro has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Tammaro is incarcerated for the murder of a former girlfriend, who decided that she no longer wanted to be in a relationship with him. It appears he is in complete denial of the significance of his violent and risky behavior. His parole violation was eerily similar to the behavior he exhibited leading up to the murder. The Board reviewed the expert evaluation and concluded more intensive treatment is warranted.

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. Tammaro's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of her incarceration. The Board has also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Tammaro's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Tammaro's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that John Tammaro is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Tammaro's next appearance before the Board will take place in three years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages him 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

  
Date