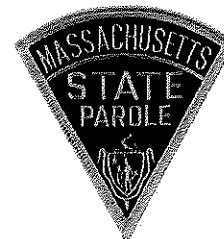


*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*

**PAROLE BOARD**

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**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**JON LITTLE**  
**W67693**

**TYPE OF HEARING:**            **Review Hearing**

**DATE OF HEARING:**        **December 7, 2023**

**DATE OF DECISION:**      **February 27, 2024**

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman<sup>1</sup>, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse

**VOTE:** Parole is granted to Keenan House two weeks from the date of decision.

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY:** On February 7, 2000, after a jury trial in Barnstable Superior Court, Jon Little was convicted of second-degree murder in the death of Paul Peterson. He was sentenced to serve life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was also sentenced to serve a concurrent sentence of 5 to 7 years for conspiracy to commit arson. The Massachusetts Appeals Court affirmed the convictions on May 28, 2002. *Commonwealth v. Little*, 54 Mass. App. Ct. 877, 768 N.E.2d 611 (2002). Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2013, and after a review hearing in 2019. On December 7, 2023, Jon Little appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Justin Drechsler. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Jon Little's December 7, 2023 hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On October 14, 1998, Jon Little stabbed and killed 58-year-old Paul Peterson. Mr. Little, a 34-year-old homeless man, had an altercation with Mr. Peterson over an abandoned railroad shed in Hyannis. Their argument, fueled by vodka, burst into violence. While Mr. Little's female companion, Ruth McHenry, looked on, the two men, armed with knives, fought one another. Mr. Little (with assistance from Ms. McHenry) prevailed, and Mr. Peterson died almost immediately from multiple stab wounds. After leaving Mr. Peterson's body in the railroad

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<sup>1</sup> Tonomey Coleman was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

shed, Mr. Little and Ms. McHenry checked into a motel and spoke to another friend, Elliot Long. Mr. Little told him that he had killed a man and needed Mr. Long to "torch" the railroad shed. Mr. Little gave Mr. Long 20 dollars and instructed him to put diesel fuel on Mr. Peterson's body and in and around the shed. He was then told to light it all on fire. Mr. Long went to the shed and did as he was instructed. A little while later, Mr. Long returned to the motel room. Mr. Little asked Mr. Long, "Is it all set?" Mr. Long replied, "I took care of it."

All evidence, including their clothing, was placed in a trash bag and thrown into a dumpster by Ms. McHenry. About two hours after Mr. Little killed Mr. Peterson, a Barnstable police officer saw smoke billowing from the area of the shed and called the fire department. As Barnstable firefighters were extinguishing the fire, they discovered Mr. Peterson's charred body.

**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:** Jon Little, now 59-years-old, has been incarcerated for approximately 24 years. He has maintained employment in the Clothing Shop since 2011. Mr. Little has had only five non-violent d[isciplinary] reports during his incarceration. Mr. Little reports attending weekly AA meetings. Mr. Little has been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder, PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), and personality disorder. He has re-engaged in MH (mental health) services since his last appearance before the Board. Mr. Little also reports a TBI (traumatic brain injury). The Board reviewed Dr. DiCataldo's 2019 report and CPCS's Social Services Advocate Jacquelyn Oppler's 2023 letter. According to Mr. Little's re-entry plan, he has been accepted to Keenan House and expects to receive services through DMH (Department of Mental Health) and avail himself of psychiatric and counseling services in the community. No one appeared in opposition. Two clinicians testified in support.

The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Jon Little has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Waive work for LTRP; Curfew – must be home between 10pm and 6am or at Parole Officer's discretion; Electronic Monitoring at Parole Officer's discretion; Must take prescribed medication, if prescribed; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with Agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with Agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; No contact with victim(s)' family; Must have mental health counseling for Bi-polar I and PTSD; Long Term Residential Program – Keenan House; AA at least 3 times per week; Mandatory – must sign all necessary release of information forms.

*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