



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**JOSE VELASQUEZ**

**W64535**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** June 1, 2017

**DATE OF DECISION:** June 18, 2018

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe

**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 five years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On April 22, 1998, in Hampden Superior Court, Jose Velasquez pleaded guilty to second degree murder in the death of Maria Nunez and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Mr. Velasquez met his common-law wife Maria Nunez in Puerto Rico when he was 48-years-old and she was 17-years-old. They were together for 12 years before the murder. They had two biological children, in addition to an older child of Ms. Nunez (who was a baby when they had met). The family moved from Puerto Rico to Massachusetts in 1996. Mr. Velasquez never held a job in Massachusetts, so the family relied on the income of Ms. Nunez. Mr. Velasquez sought federal disability benefits, but was denied. He spent a considerable amount of time drinking and shooting dice with his friends.

Ms. Nunez became increasingly dissatisfied with the domestic arrangement, which included Mr. Velasquez's controlling behavior. Two weeks before she was murdered, Ms. Nunez told Mr. Velasquez to move out of the family apartment. Then, just days before the murder, Mr. Velasquez told a family friend that he would stab Ms. Nunez. When Mr. Velasquez returned to the apartment on the evening of July 11, 1997, three children (ages 11, 9, and 6) were at home. Mr. Velasquez subsequently stabbed Ms. Nunez four times in the chest and back. She also had seven additional incised wounds to the back, arm, and hands. The children yelled at Mr. Velasquez to stop the attack, and the 11-year-old son grabbed Mr. Velasquez to try to stop him, as well. Ms. Nunez died from the blood loss.

Police arrested Mr. Velasquez shortly after the murder. He told police that he entered the apartment and saw an unknown man stabbing Ms. Nunez. The next day, he gave a second statement in which he blamed the victim for all of the marital problems and claimed the insults and taunts provoked him to pick up a knife. He claimed, however, that he had no memory of the killing. Both of the statements were false.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JUNE 1, 2017**

Jose Velasquez, now 73-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for his review hearing on June 1, 2017. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Velasquez had been denied parole after his initial hearing in 2012. Mr. Velasquez (through the use of a Spanish interpreter) made an opening statement, offering an apology to the family of Maria Nunez and their children. He said that he was selfish and that, due to his actions, those who were left behind have suffered. Mr. Velasquez informed the Board that when he killed Ms. Nunez, "it was a moment of jealousy." He failed to acknowledge that there were problems in the marriage. During the hearing, Mr. Velasquez described the brutal stabbing of Ms. Nunez as an "accident." Mr. Velasquez's testimony remains in conflict with that of the Commonwealth; he deflects his culpability, often blaming the victim. At the time of the offense, he claims that Ms. Nunez had become distant, but that he could not understand why. He continues to dispute the testimony that he had told a family friend that Ms. Nunez and others were making him crazy, and that he envisioned himself stabbing Ms. Nunez several times. Mr. Velasquez continued as not forthcoming about his prior use of guns that intimidated family members. Further, Mr. Velasquez has a long history as a perpetrator of domestic violence.

The Board discussed Mr. Velasquez's institutional adjustment since his last hearing. Mr. Velasquez is currently incarcerated at MCI-Norfolk, where he works in the clothing shop. He has successfully participated in programs, including those recommended by the Department of Correction in his risk reduction plans. Since his hearing in 2012, Mr. Velasquez has participated in numerous programs, including: Nuestra Familia, Jericho Circle, Emotional Awareness, Toastmasters, Religious programs, and several Cognitive Skills Workshops. Although records indicate that Mr. Velasquez participated in a domestic violence workshop in 2016, he was unable to convey what he had learned.

The Board considered oral testimony from the victim's sister and brother, both of whom expressed strong opposition to parole. Hampden County District Attorney Howard Safford spoke in opposition to parole.



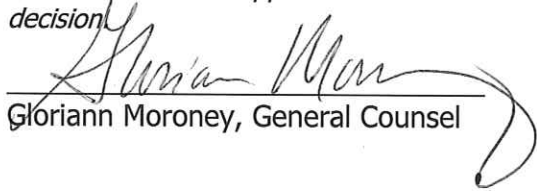
### III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Jose Velasquez has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Velasquez continues to lack insight, and his presentment appears to be devoid of empathy. Release does not meet the legal standard.

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

Mr. Velasquez's next appearance before the Board will take place in five years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Velasquez 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.*

  
Gloriann Moroney, General Counsel

6/18/18  
Date