

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



PAROLE BOARD

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Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

KENNETH SEGUIN¹

W53954

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: March 17, 2022

DATE OF DECISION: October 26, 2022

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, 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 February 4, 1993, after a jury trial in Middlesex Superior Court, Kenneth Seguin was convicted of three counts of second-degree murder in the deaths of his wife, Mary Anne (known as Polly), and their two children, Danny (age 7), and Amy (age 5). He was sentenced to serve life in prison with the possibility of parole for the murder of his wife, followed by two concurrent life sentences with the possibility of parole for the murder of his children.²

¹ Although numerous documents list the subject's name as Kenneth Seguin, the indictments and Supreme Judicial Court opinion on this matter list his name as Kenneth Seguin.

² Following the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Dinkins & another v. Massachusetts Parole Board, 486 Mass. 605 (2021), Mr. Seguin received an aggregated parole eligibility date of April 30, 2022.

On the evening of April 28, 1992, while Polly was out (and just a few days after moving to a new residence in Holliston), Mr. Seguin drugged his children with sleeping pills and drove them to a deserted pond in Franklin. He then murdered them, concealing their bodies in the murky waters of the pond. Mr. Seguin later drove home to Holliston and bludgeoned Polly to death in their bed. Polly's body, clothed only in a nightshirt, was discovered the next morning floating in the Sudbury River in Southborough. She had suffered a gaping wound to her left temple, and a subsequent autopsy revealed that the cause of death was blunt force trauma to the head. After her body was discovered, police questioned Mr. Seguin, who claimed that two men had broken into his home and attacked him and bashed Polly over the head with an axe. He told authorities that the intruders had given the children sleeping pills, and that they had been in their beds.

Police discovered the children's bodies on May 2, 1992, at Beaver Pond in Franklin. Danny's body was submerged under the water. Mr. Seguin had piled leaves, sticks, debris, and muck from the bottom of the pond on top of his body. Mr. Seguin slashed Danny's throat with a razor, slicing him from each earlobe to his Adam's apple. Amy's body was discovered not far from Danny's. Again, Mr. Seguin used debris from the area to conceal her body, forcing her head into the muck at the bottom of the pond, so that only her sneakers were visible. Mr. Seguin slashed both of her wrists and severely injured her arms. Autopsies revealed traces of sleeping pills in their systems. Subsequent police investigation revealed that Mr. Seguin had attempted to cover up the murders by flipping over the blood-stained mattress from the bed (where he killed Polly) and covering it with a quilt. He also made anonymous calls to the children's schools the next morning, informing school authorities that neither child would be present that day.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON MARCH 17, 2022³

Kenneth Seguin, now 65-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on March 17, 2022. He was represented by Attorney Sarah Elkins from Boston College Law School. Mr. Seguin had been denied parole after his initial hearing in 2007, and after his review hearings in 2012 and 2017. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Seguin expressed his remorse for the murder of his family and acknowledged the impact of his actions on the extended family. He stated that he should have sought professional help for his depression and repressed anger.

When the Board questioned him as to his mindset at the time of the governing offense, Mr. Seguin accepted responsibility for his conduct and reported that he had a great deal of anger towards himself at the time. He had experienced significant stressors, including depression and friction in his marriage. He also felt unsure and inadequate at work. When Board Members asked why seemingly ordinary stressors contributed towards such heinous actions, Mr. Seguin replied that his internal shame and sense of failure was so great that he felt he could not face the next day. Mr. Seguin reported his reliance on a twisted altruistic belief that he should "stop the suffering in this life" and facilitate the whole family's entrance to heaven. He was unable to separate himself from his family and, if he could not live, then neither could his family. Mr. Seguin claimed that he first considered murdering his family on the evening of the crime, but could not provide any further insight into why he killed them.

³ The entire video recording of Mr. Seguin's March 17, 2022 hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

Upon Board Member questioning, Mr. Seguin discussed how mental health counseling assisted him in understanding the role that anger played in his crime. While growing up, his family did not express anger and, as a result, he learned to repress his own anger. Mr. Seguin maintains that he has since learned how to cope with anger through communication. Mr. Seguin spoke of his participation in Restorative Justice Retreat, Menswork, and Mental Health Group Therapy. He also served as a facilitator for the Alternatives to Violence program. Mr. Seguin characterized the Restorative Justice Retreat as particularly impactful, crediting the program with helping him develop empathy towards his victims.

Mr. Seguin has held several positions within the institution, but he has been terminated from several roles due to theft. At the time of this hearing, Mr. Seguin was employed as a runner in his unit. The Board questioned Mr. Seguin about two recent disciplinary reports, one issued in 2017, for lying to staff and another issued in 2021, for violating a departmental rule. Mr. Seguin characterized the first report as simply a communication error, rather than an overt attempt at deception. As to the second report, Mr. Seguin was cited for saving documents on a law clerk library computer that were unrelated to official use. Mr. Seguin, however, claimed that he had been previously permitted to save documents in such a manner.

The Board considered testimony in support of parole from Mr. Seguin's family members and two friends. The Board considered testimony from Dr. Robert Mendoza and reviewed his written submission. The Board also considered testimony in opposition to parole from several members of the victims' family and from retired Holliston Police Detective Charles Todd. The Board considered testimony, and a letter, in opposition to parole from Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Adrienne Lynch.

III. DECISION

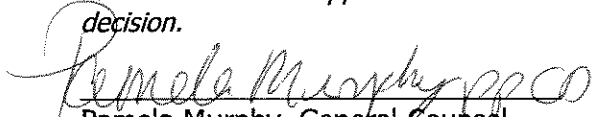
The Board is of the opinion that Kenneth Seguin has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Seguin is serving three life sentences for the murders of his wife, Mary Anne, and two children, 7-year-old Danny and 5-year-old Amy. The Board notes the brutal and planful nature of the crime. Mr. Seguin has incurred disciplinary infractions in recent years, including in October 2021 and April 2017. These are concerning to the Board as they indicate Mr. Seguin was manipulative and unwilling to follow the rules of the institution – although he minimized the severity of the infractions. The Board considered the expert opinion of Dr. Mendoza, which details a complicated mental health history and recommendations for further treatment. The Board encourages Mr. Seguin to engage in programs to focus on victim empathy, VOEG, and to engage in any correspondence courses to address domestic violence issues. The Board remains concerned that his stated motive for the offenses still contradicts the evidence and his actions at the time of the murders.

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

Mr. Seguin'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. Seguin 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

10/26/22
Date