

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



**PAROLE BOARD**

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**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**KURT HUENEFELD**  
**W40021**

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

**DATE OF HEARING:**        **October 8, 2020**

**DATE OF DECISION:**      **August 30, 2021**

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Karen McCarthy, 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 in three years from the date of the hearing.<sup>1</sup>

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On September 24, 1983, in Middlesex Superior Court, Kurt Huenefeld was convicted of second-degree murder in the death of Robert Crowe and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was convicted of burglary with armed assault in a dwelling and sentenced to a consecutive term of 10 to 12 years in prison, 3 years to serve, with the balance suspended.

On the evening of October 25, 1982, Kurt Huenefeld, age 21, left his parent's home at approximately 9:00 p.m. and traveled to the Long Bedford Motel. He was joined by a friend, and the two men intended to spend the night drinking at the motel bar. Prior to their arrival at the bar, and at Mr. Huenefeld's suggestion, both men went to the home of Robert Crowe.

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<sup>1</sup> Five Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in three years from the date of the hearing and two Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in two years.

While inside Mr. Crowe's bedroom, Mr. Huenefeld injected cocaine into his arm and obtained additional cocaine to use later that night. Mr. Huenefeld and his friend then went to the bar, staying until approximately 12:00 a.m. Throughout the night, the two men consumed alcohol, and Mr. Huenefeld injected more cocaine. In the early morning hours of October 26, Mr. Huenefeld and his friend began to travel home. On the way, Mr. Huenefeld suggested that they stop at Mr. Crowe's residence a second time. Mr. Huenefeld went into Mr. Crowe's house for approximately 15 minutes, while his friend waited outside. Both men then returned to the home of Mr. Huenefeld's parents and went to sleep.

After his friend fell asleep, however, Mr. Huenefeld returned to Mr. Crowe's house with the intent of stealing cocaine. When Mr. Crowe awoke during the burglary, Mr. Huenefeld stabbed him 23 times with a screwdriver. When he returned to his parent's house, Mr. Huenefeld frantically woke his friend to tell him what happened, claiming to have stabbed Mr. Crowe four or five times. Mr. Crowe succumbed to his injuries. His body was discovered later that day by his father.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON OCTOBER 8, 2020**

Kurt Huenefeld, now 60-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on October 8, 2020, for a review hearing. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Huenefeld was denied parole after his initial hearing in 1998, and after his review hearings in 2002, 2005, 2010, and 2015. When Board Members inquired as to the governing offense, Mr. Huenefeld indicated that most of the details of the murder are "vague." He remembers going to a bar with a friend and purchasing cocaine from Mr. Crowe earlier in the night; however, he has no memory of breaking into Mr. Crowe's house and stabbing him. Despite his limited memory, he told the Board that he "clearly" remembers injecting himself with a substantial amount of cocaine that night. The Board noted that Mr. Huenefeld's version of the crime appeared inconsistent, as it is unclear as to what he remembers and what he does not. When Board Members pointed out his tendency to minimize his culpability by shifting blame to others, Mr. Huenefeld explained that he "imagines" that his friend was present when Mr. Crowe was stabbed. Board Members noted that his defense at trial was that he was not responsible for the stabbing of Mr. Crowe. When asked to explain, Mr. Huenefeld stated that it was his attorney's idea to assert that defense. When Board Members asked him how he was able to commit such a violent act, Mr. Huenefeld characterized his actions as a "berserk response."

The Board further questioned Mr. Huenefeld as to a letter he attempted to send to Mr. Crowe's sister in 2005, where he placed blame on his friend. While he acknowledged that writing the letter was wrong, Mr. Huenefeld claimed that his intent was to "alleviate her guilt," since the Commonwealth's argument at trial indicated that Mr. Crowe may have survived if someone intervened. Mr. Huenefeld told the Board that he did not want Mr. Crowe's sister to feel as though she could have prevented his death, as Mr. Crowe was "stabbed 26 times, mostly in the head." When asked about the details of the letter, he claimed that he could not remember, but "imagines" that he shifted blame away from himself and on to his friend. When Board Members questioned him as to whether he intended to have his friend charged with Mr. Crowe's murder, Mr. Huenefeld responded that he could not recall. Moreover, he claimed that he was at the "peak of an opioid addiction" when he wrote the letter.

When Board Members questioned him as to his programming efforts, Mr. Huenefeld indicated that he has participated in all programs available to him. However, Board Members noted that he has yet to engage in any program that addresses victim impact, specifically, Restorative Justice. When asked to explain, Mr. Huenefeld stated, "It was not offered to [him]." Additionally, the Board noted that Mr. Huenefeld, on more than one occasion, repeated the same program multiple times, instead of participating in new programs. In response, Mr. Huenefeld explained that the Department of Correction does not provide an adequate number

of programs. The Board encouraged Mr. Huenefeld to increase his involvement in meaningful rehabilitative programs, as it appeared he has put forth minimal effort thus far.

The Board discussed Mr. Huenefeld's substance abuse history. Mr. Huenefeld described having a severe cocaine addiction, admitting that he injected cocaine multiple times and drank extensively on the day of the governing offense. When asked about his participation in AA/NA, Mr. Huenefeld asserted that he does not attend meetings due to its religious element. Rather, he completed the Correctional Recovery Academy and participated in nonreligious self-help groups to address his addiction, such as the Smart Recovery Program. However, he has not yet participated in any addiction-related program for a significant amount of time. When the Board noted that substance abuse did not appear to be a priority, Mr. Huenefeld stated that the program he prefers is no longer available. Board Members encouraged Mr. Huenefeld to re-engage, as his sobriety is a significant part of his rehabilitation.

The Board considered the testimony of Mr. Huenefeld's family members in support of parole. The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from Mr. Crowe's family member. The Board also considered testimony from Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Doug Cannon in opposition to parole, as well as a letter.

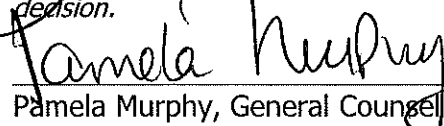
### **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Kurt Huenefeld has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Huenefeld has served approximately 30 years for the murder of 23-year-old Robert Crowe. The victim was stabbed approximately 26 times with a screwdriver. Mr. Huenefeld still cannot explain as to why he committed such a brutal murder. Mr. Huenefeld is encouraged to engage in treatment and programming to gain insight as to victim empathy and impact (Restorative Justice). He is encouraged to continue to maintain a positive adjustment and comply with a personalized program plan.

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

Mr. Huenefeld'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. Huenefeld 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.*

  
Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

  
Date