



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

**PAROLE BOARD**

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**LUCILLE REID**

**F25420**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing  
**DATE OF HEARING:** January 15, 2013  
**DATE OF DECISION:** March 26, 2013

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Cesar Archilla, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sheila Dupre, Ina Howard-Hogan, Lucy Soto-Abbe, Josh Wall

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, institutional record, the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the board, we conclude by a unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole at this time. Parole is denied with a review in five years.

**I.STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On March 14, 1979, Lucille Reid stabbed Danny Thomas Harris through the heart with a serrated steak knife after a heated argument. The argument was a result of Ms. Reid having bitten the hand of Mr. Harris's son, Danny Jr., to "teach him a lesson." Ms. Reid was convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to serve life in prison on February 14, 1980. Her subsequent appeal was denied. *Commonwealth v. Reid*, 384 Mass. 247 (1981).

Ms. Reid lived across the hall from Mr. Harris, his girlfriend, and their son. While Danny Jr. was playing with Ms. Reid's son, he bit the little boy's cheek. Ms. Reid insisted that her son bite Danny Jr. in retaliation; however, he refused. Ms. Reid decided to bite Danny Jr. in order to teach him a lesson, precipitating a confrontation that led to Ms. Reid fatally stabbing Mr. Harris. After the police located and detained her, Ms. Reid told them that she had acted in self-defense.

While Ms. Reid was on bail awaiting trial, she participated in another stabbing death. During that incident, she and co-defendant Lisa O'Dell fatally stabbed John F. Anderson eighteen times in the chest. According to Ms. O'Dell, Mr. Anderson was highly intoxicated and solicited both women for oral sex. The women agreed. While Ms. O'Dell was in the bedroom with Mr. Anderson, Ms. Reid searched his pockets and wallet and located his car keys. She left in his vehicle and returned a short time later to find Ms. O'Dell and Mr. Anderson arguing about the fact that he did not have enough money to pay them. She joined the argument, and the women retaliated by stabbing him repeatedly. He died from his injuries.

On July 8, 1981, in Middlesex Superior Court, Ms. Reid pleaded guilty to manslaughter for the death of John Anderson and was sentenced to 15 to 18 years in prison, from and after the life sentence she was already serving for Mr. Harris's murder. The life sentence and the consecutive 15 to 18 year term have been aggregated to create a single parole eligibility, as required by the law then in effect.

## **II. INSTITUTIONAL CONDUCT**

Ms. Reid's institutional conduct has been problematic. Over the course of her incarceration, she has incurred 186 disciplinary reports, the most recent of which was in June of 2012 for refusing to obey staff orders to move out of the way to permit emergency responders to pass by her. A number of those reports are for being disrespectful, verbally abusive, and threatening to staff, as well as numerous instances where she made up false accusations about Department of Correction staff. The most serious disciplinary reports include assaulting other inmates, on one occasion with a pair of scissors, putting a pillow over an inmate's head, and making threats to hurt staff. The majority of Ms. Reid's major disciplinary reports occurred in the earlier years of her incarceration. Her conduct has improved over the last year, during which she incurred two disciplinary reports.

While incarcerated, Ms. Reid participated in the Correctional Recovery Academy, Choices Program, Parenting Program, and Anger Management. She attends AA/NA approximately twice per month. In addition, she has completed 12 college credits at Middlesex Community College, has taken various computer courses and the Dental Laboratory Technician Program. Finally, Ms. Reid takes part in religious activities within the institution, peer education, and works in the kitchen. Ms. Reid has not participated in any formal programming since her last parole hearing in 2008.

## **III. PAROLE HEARING ON JANUARY 15, 2013**

During Ms. Reid's interview with parole staff on January 7, 2013, she was resistant to being asked specific questions and refused to cooperate with the interview process. At the hearing, Ms. Reid acknowledged such behavior and stated that she had slipped into a "serious depression." In a follow-up memorandum, Ms. Reid's attorney noted that during the staff interview, she was not able to "effectively communicate verbally," due to her state of depression. In addition, given that she has been consistently taught to walk away from situations that are overwhelming for her, "she put this practice to use; instead of making disrespectful or insolent statements, she now has learned to be quiet and simply walk away from overwhelming situations."

Ms. Reid's general presentation during the hearing was improved in comparison to the staff interview. She appeared to benefit from the support of her student attorney. Ms. Reid described a significant history of abuse and mental illness that contributed to her actions that resulted in the homicides of both men. Ms. Reid described the murder of Danny Harris with an

incomplete memory for exact details. She recalls the argument regarding his son and his being extremely angry with what she had done. She reported that she felt threatened by Mr. Harris stating "I was scared when Danny came in. He was a big guy. I didn't know what to do. He was blocking me when I tried to get away. I stabbed him. They said I stabbed him in the heart. We kept swearing at each other." Ms. Reid did not deny stabbing Mr. Harris; however, she expressed that her intent was to defend herself. With respect to the murder of Mr. Anderson, Ms. Reid stated that she was high and recalls that she was upset that he did not pay her for her sexual acts.

Ms. Reid reported that the abuse of drugs and alcohol played a factor in both murders. She reported having no guidance and "heading in the wrong direction" throughout her adolescent and adult life. Ms. Reid stated that she regrets killing both men and again attributed her abusive upbringing and development of poor survival skills, substance abuse, and mental illness for precipitating such violence. Ms. Reid reported that she has now gained the necessary skill set and support to maintain sobriety and manage her emotions in a productive way. Ms. Reid stated she also has the support of her son and other family members who are willing to assist her with re-entering society. Ms. Reid's son spoke in support of her parole and stated that he and other family members live locally and will be able to assist in her adjustment.

Ms. Reid was asked about her extensive history of disciplinary reports, which she attributed to challenges adjusting to the prison system, her need for mental health treatment, and her difficulty with authority. The Board noted the improvement in her institutional behavior, which Ms. Reid stated was a result of the continued adjustment of her medications and her efforts to "show I can respect authority." Ms. Reid also reported that her weekly support group is helpful, as well as the skills she has gained from specific programming and her commitment to her religious beliefs.

Ms. Reid is requesting parole with a re-entry plan to spend one year of positive adjustment in minimum security, and establish services and housing with SPAN, Inc. Her outpatient plan would include numerous specialized mental health and other services. Ms. Reid however, would be living in the community without the on-site monitoring of specialized staff.

Members of the Harris family spoke in opposition to Ms. Reid's parole. Middlesex Assistant District Attorney Marian Ryan also opposed parole, noting that in comparison to prior parole hearings, this hearing was replete with additional details, new facts, and recollections that are inconsistent with Ms. Reid's past testimony. Assistant District Attorney Ryan stated that Ms. Reid is not credible, and remains a danger to public safety.

#### **IV. DECISION**

Lucille Reid was on bail after committing the stabbing death of Danny Thomas Harris when she participated in the murder of John Anderson. Her institutional behavior has been fraught with disciplinary issues and she has only recently demonstrated a period of stabilization and progress in her rehabilitation.

Ms. Reid is the victim of significant trauma and abuse, which has clearly contributed to her mental health and functional impairments. She has a lengthy history of psychiatric symptoms and maladaptive behavioral issues that have required the highest level of security and treatment throughout most of her incarceration. Ms. Reid's most updated mental health contact sheet submitted states that she continues to suffer from "impaired mood associated with Dysthymia, interpersonal conflicts associated with a Personality Disorder, not otherwise specified" and additional symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Given that

she has essentially been institutionalized for such a significant amount of time, and has just begun to demonstrate marked improvement, her parole plan is insufficient in relation to her needs.

The standard we apply in assessing candidates for parole is set out in 120 C.M.R. 300.04, which provides that "[p]arole 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." Applying that appropriately high standard here, the Board determines that Ms. Reid is not a suitable candidate for parole at this time and that her release is not compatible with the welfare of society. Although the Board recognizes that Ms. Reid has made significant progress in addressing her mental health and behavioral needs, and has demonstrated a better ability to conform her behavior to prison rules, this change has been recent and has taken place under the confines of the prison system, with mental health and other staff at her immediate disposal. The Board encourages Ms. Reid to continue working with mental health specialists to maintain the progress that she has begun, and to engage in positive programming.

*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 each member of the Board has reviewed the applicant's entire criminal record. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.*

Josh Wall

Josh Wall, Chairman

March 15, 2013

Date