



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



**PAROLE BOARD**

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**Paul M. Treseler**  
*Chairman*

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*Executive Director*

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**MARK JONES**

**W39169**

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

**DATE OF HEARING:** **June 5, 2018**

**DATE OF DECISION:** **March 19, 2019**

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa, 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 that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole.<sup>1</sup> Parole is denied with a review scheduled in three years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On September 10, 1982, after a jury trial in Suffolk Superior Court, Mark Jones was found guilty of the second degree murder of Brian Cropper and sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On November 1, 1981, Brian Cropper and his friend were together at "Roscoe's" on Warren Street near Dudley Station. At one point, Mr. Cropper and his friend were outside Roscoe's and observed Frank Webb and Mark Jones. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Cropper to "come over." Mr. Cropper and his friend then walked up to Mr. Webb and Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones said to Mr. Cropper, "Where are my chains?" Mr. Jones then snatched a silver chain from Mr. Cropper's neck and took money from his pocket. Mr. Jones then punched Mr. Cropper, and Mr. Webb punched Mr. Cropper's friend. Mr. Jones and Mr. Webb fled, and Mr. Cropper took a machete from his gym bag and chased them. When the two men realized that Mr. Cropper was

<sup>1</sup> Two Board Members denied parole with a review in two years from the date of the hearing.

chasing them, Mr. Jones stated, "Give me my gun." Mr. Webb replied, "I got it man." Upon hearing these words, Mr. Cropper dropped the machete and turned to flee. Mr. Webb then shot him in the back. Mr. Cropper died as a result of the gunshot wound.

Mr. Jones' co-defendant, Frank Webb, was a juvenile at the time of the murder.<sup>2</sup> There have been two appeals on this case; both were affirmed.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JUNE 5, 2018**

Mr. Jones was denied parole after his initial hearing in 1997, but was paroled in 2002. However, he was returned to custody in 2003, and his parole was revoked. Mr. Jones had a review hearing in 2006, after postponing his revocation hearing, and was granted a parole reserve date. In January 2007, Mr. Jones was again released to parole supervision. He was returned to custody in 2008 after a problematic adjustment, and his parole was revoked. He was re-paroled in January 2009, after his revocation was not affirmed on all counts. In November 2009, Mr. Jones' parole officer learned that he was abusing his wife and using cocaine. In December 2009, he was placed on final warning status. In January 2010, Mr. Jones was returned to custody, and his parole was again revoked. Mr. Jones was denied parole after his 2010 review hearing with a five year review. In February 2016, Mr. Jones was again re-paroled. However, he was returned to custody in August 2017 for a domestic incident involving his girlfriend, which resulted in a Temporary Order of Protection of Abuse being issued.

Mark Jones, now 56-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for his review hearing on June 5, 2018. He was not represented by counsel, nor did he provide an opening statement. The Board questioned Mr. Jones as to his progress in rehabilitation since his commitment, as well as his level of insight and candor. The Board also discussed Mr. Jones' institutional adjustment since his return to custody. Mr. Jones is incarcerated at North Central Correctional Institution, where he is currently involved in the NEADS program. His personalized program plan indicates that he is on the waitlist for the following programs: Violence Reduction, Criminal Thinking, Peace Education Program, and Graduate Maintenance Program.

Board Members discussed the approximately 18 months of Mr. Jones' parole supervision, prior to being returned to custody. He was paroled in February 2016 to a long term residential program and had successfully completed the program in August 2016. Mr. Jones struggled with employment, however, as he held four different jobs and lived at various locations. In February 2017, Mr. Jones engaged in a romantic relationship. In August, the woman contacted the Warwick, Rhode Island Police Department to have Mr. Jones remove his property from her house. She subsequently filed for Temporary Order of Protection of Abuse, stating that she was in fear of her safety and had been physically assaulted and harassed. Mr. Jones denies any physical abuse, but admits that he had been verbally abusive at times. After his return to custody, Mr. Jones made a three-way call and offered the woman \$1,000 to remove the abuse prevention order, which expired in November 2017. Mr. Jones also began to self-medicate in August with cocaine, after a dog bit him, and he was only prescribed Tylenol for the pain.

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. Jones was convicted under a joint venture theory.

No witnesses gave oral testimony in support of or in opposition to parole. The Board considered a letter from Assistant District Attorney Darcy Jordan of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office opposing Mr. Jones' parole.

### **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Jones has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Jones has been paroled three times and violated his parole each time. Mr. Jones should engage in programming to address his causative factors and refrain from incurring disciplinary infractions.

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 an 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. Jones' institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board also considered a risk and needs assessment, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Jones' risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Jones' case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Mark Jones is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

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

  
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Shara Benedetti, Acting General Counsel

3/19/19  
Date