



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**MARTIN BOWLER  
W42980**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** June 2, 2016

**DATE OF DECISION:** October 24, 2016

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Ina Howard-Hogan, 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 the 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 four years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On November 21, 1986, in Middlesex Superior Court, Martin Bowler was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole for the second degree murder of Richard Farnese.

On October 27, 1985, Watertown police arrived at an apartment on Charles Street and found Richard Farnese on the living room floor with a knife wound in his upper chest area. Witnesses on the scene reported that Mr. Bowler forced his way into the apartment and an altercation ensued. Mr. Bowler was arguing with the apartment's resident and then, without provocation, stabbed Mr. Farnese with a large steak knife and punched him several times as well. Mr. Bowler then fled from the scene. Mr. Farnese died nine days later as a result of his injuries.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JUNE 2, 2016**

Martin Bowler, now 60-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on June 2, 2016 for a review hearing and was represented by Attorney Ron Ranta. Mr. Bowler was previously denied parole on April 8, 2016 from a June 2, 2015 review hearing. In 2010, he was denied parole with a review in two years. However, Mr. Bowler had postponed his hearing for three years in order to address the mental health and substance abuse issues that attributed to his return to custody as a parole violator.

Martin Bowler was first paroled on September 22, 2004 to East Boston Sober Housing, where he (admittedly) had difficulty adjusting. On November 8, 2004, Bowler was returned to custody for oxycodone use. He was re-paroled with a final warning and the added condition to complete the East Boston Rehab Program and attend mandatory mental health counseling. Mr. Bowler appeared to be complying with these conditions until January 2005, when he was terminated from the program for testing positive for opiates and Suboxone. He was deemed whereabouts unknown and then arrested on January 27, 2005. Mr. Bowler informed the Board, however, that he intended to turn himself into authorities after the Super Bowl. He also admitted that during that time he was deemed whereabouts unknown, he consumed alcohol and smoked marijuana on a daily basis.

During the hearing on June 2, 2016, Parole Board Members questioned Mr. Bowler as to his state of mind on the night of the murder. Mr. Bowler testified that he started drinking and using drugs at 9:00 a.m. on the day of the murder, and that he continued to do so until the time of the murder. When asked about incidents of violence prior to the murder, he stated that he had been in several fights in bar rooms. The Board also questioned Mr. Bowler about his insight into the behavior that resulted in his parole violation. Mr. Bowler acknowledged that he has anger issues, addiction problems, and mental health issues. He informed the Board that he resides in the Residential Treatment Unit at Old Colony Correctional Center, and he currently sees a counselor about once a month and a psychiatrist once every three months. However, he stated that he had been seeing the psychiatrist about once a month due to the upcoming hearing. Mr. Bowler said that he was evaluated by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) in order to obtain services, but the DMH denied his application.

Mr. Bowler testified that he was first prescribed Ritalin in the 1990's and took it for approximately 10 years. He said that when he was incarcerated at Souza Baranowski Correctional Center, he was taken off Ritalin as it caused him to become psychotic. Mr. Bowler admitted to the Board that he needs care for his mental health problems. He told the Board that he still needs the services offered in the Residential Treatment Unit "to help me with my mental health." Upon questioning from the Board about his diagnosis, Mr. Bowler agreed that he was diagnosed with Psychosis SOS, a serious mental illness that requires the intensive treatment that he is currently receiving. Mr. Bowler stated that if he doesn't get treatment, he may become paranoid, make poor decisions, and possibly become violent. Mr. Bowler agreed with the Board that he would need help from the DMH, if released back to the community. Upon questioning from the Board as to why he does not attend AA/NA programs, Mr. Bowler said that he believes that Addiction Psychotherapy (which he attends once a week) addresses all addiction issues. He told the Board, however, that he would attend AA/NA meetings on the outside, if paroled.

There was no testimony in support of Mr. Bowler's parole. Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Jessica Noble testified in opposition to parole and noted Mr. Bowler's failure to take responsibility for his crime, as well as his poor impulse control. She also noted that his release would be incompatible with society.

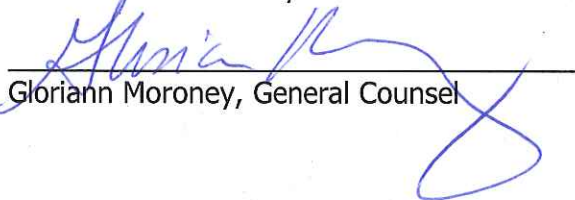
### III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Bowler has not yet demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. The Board believes that a longer period of positive rehabilitative adjustment and programming would be beneficial to Mr. Bowler's rehabilitation. The Board recommends that Mr. Bowler pursue assistance from the Department of Mental Health to identify if he is a viable candidate for services.

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

Mr. Bowler's next appearance before the Board will take place in four years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Bowler to continue working towards his full rehabilitation and to pursue possible services from the Department of Mental Health.

*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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Gloriann Moroney, General Counsel

10/24/14  
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Date