



**Charles D. Baker**  
Governor

**Karyn Polito**  
Lieutenant Governor

**Daniel Bennett**  
Secretary

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

**PAROLE BOARD**

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**Paul M. Treseler**  
Chairman

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**MARTINE PRESSAT**

**F80000**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** October 26, 2017

**DATE OF DECISION:** September 24, 2018

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, 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 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 September 15, 2000, in Norfolk Superior Court, a jury convicted Martine Pressat of second degree murder in the death of 77-year-old John Weil. She received a life sentence with the possibility of parole. She was also convicted of five counts of larceny, and those charges were placed on file. She appealed her conviction in 2002, but the appeals court ruled that judgment was affirmed.<sup>2</sup> Ms. Pressat filed a motion for new trial in 2010, which was denied. The Appeals Court affirmed the denial of the motion for a new trial in 2012.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chairman Paul M. Treseler - recused

<sup>2</sup> *Commonwealth v. Martine Pressat*, 55 Mass. App. Ct. 1111 (2002)

<sup>3</sup> *Commonwealth v. Martine Pressat*, 82 Mass. App. Ct. 1114 (2012)

Martine Pressat was a home health aide who worked weekends assisting Dr. John Weil and his wife, an elderly stroke patient who was unable to walk, speak, or feed herself. On December 5, 1997, Dr. Weil met with his accountant, and they discovered that 31-year-old Martine Pressat had been stealing money. She forged at least five large checks, which resulted in a total theft of \$43,000 from Dr. Weil's bank account. On December 7, 1997, after Dr. Weil confronted her, Ms. Pressat killed him in his bedroom in Westwood. He was found by a home health aide on the next shift. The cause of death was severe blunt neck trauma. On December 11, 1997, Ms. Pressat was arrested at John F. Kennedy Airport. Ms. Pressat subsequently admitted that she had written checks from Dr. Weil's account to herself and to her friend. In addition, she also admitted to a cellmate that she killed Dr. Weil in a confrontation regarding the theft.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON OCTOBER 26, 2017**

Martine Pressat, now 51-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on October 26, 2017. She was represented by Christian Snow and Lydia Brown, students at Northeastern School of Law. Ms. Pressat had been denied parole after her initial hearing in 2012. In her opening statement to the Board, Ms. Pressat apologized to "the family for the heartbreak, [she] has caused by murdering their beloved Dr. Weil" and acknowledged that she has been incarcerated for close to 20 years for his murder. When a Board Member noted that Dr. Weil had Parkinson's disease and had been getting over a bout of bronchitis, Ms. Pressat agreed that he was "sickly at the time." She went on to say, "For the last five years, I focused on taking programs that help me understand that my actions and my motivation led to my murdering Dr. Weil." According to Ms. Pressat, the Restorative Justice program was most beneficial. She added that she completed Criminal Thinking, Violence Reduction, and Anger Management. Ms. Pressat stated that she is not the same person anymore and has learned to control her impulses.

Ms. Pressat explained that she was originally from Haiti, arriving in the United States at age 18 or 19. She married in 1995 and had a son in 1996. Ms. Pressat said that her husband was not working, and that they were struggling financially. She started working with the Weils in January 1997, as a home health aide for Dr. Weil's wife. Ms. Pressat spoke to the Board about her relationship with Dr. Weil. She stated that when she told Dr. Weil she wanted to go back to school, he offered to help, giving her money and gifts. Ms. Pressat claims that Dr. Weil said he felt lonely and maintains that he "propositioned" her about 4 months after she started working for them. She was "selfish and greedy," stating that not only was she betraying her husband, but also, betraying Dr. Weil and his wife. Ms. Pressat told the Board that after Dr. Weil denied her \$5,000 (that she had requested), she started stealing from him and writing checks to herself. She stated that she felt "entitled to it."

Ms. Pressat agreed with the Board that the day of the murder was the first time Dr. Weil confronted her about the theft. There were no discussions prior. On that day, Ms. Pressat said that Dr. Weil called her into his bedroom after she put his wife to bed. She talked about her upcoming trip to Haiti and about the items that she had purchased for her friends. When Dr. Weil said to her, "I know you have been stealing from me," she claims she did not admit to it. She was scared of what would happen to her, so she threatened Dr. Weil with exposure. She acknowledged that it was the wrong thing to do. Ms. Pressat said that when she turned to leave the room, she felt Dr. Weil's hands on her back. She turned to grab his hands, and they both fell to the floor. She admitted that she hit him several times with her wrist and saw that his nose was bleeding. Ms. Pressat explained that Dr. Weil's knee was on top of her, so she struck him



with a shoe tree in the neck. She admitted to killing him, but denied applying any pressure to Dr. Weil's neck during the incident. Ms. Pressat admitted to hitting Dr. Weil "several times," but, when pressed by a Board Member, could not give an exact number. Also, when questioned by a Board Member, Ms. Pressat denied saying anything to her previous cellmate about the murder.

When a Board Member asked Mr. Pressat how long she maintained that her actions were in self-defense, she claims it was until 2012. Ms. Pressat acknowledged that at her last hearing, some information she presented was true and some was not. Ms. Pressat stated that she was deeply ashamed of presenting that information to the Board. She said, "I think I was lying to myself, and to you, too" and that the false information became "a reality." If paroled, Ms. Pressat said she has been ordered deported to Haiti and would go back to her childhood home. She expects that her family and friends would continue to support her. Ms. Pressat described her support system as her son, friends, and family.

The Board considered testimony in support of parole from Ms. Pressat's sister-in-law, brother, and friend. The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from the husband of Dr. Weil's niece. Norfolk County Assistant District Attorney Marguerite Grant spoke in opposition to parole.

### **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Ms. Pressat has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make her release compatible with the welfare of society. Ms. Pressat, as of 2014, maintained that she killed the victim in an act of self-defense. The Board remains concerned as to Ms. Pressat's account of the governing offense. Ms. Pressat should continue to engage in programming and may consider fully engaging in the Restorative Justice program.

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

Ms. Pressat's next appearance before the Board will take place in three years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Ms. Pressat to continue working towards her 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.*

  
Gloriann Moroney, Executive Director/General Counsel

9/24/18  
Date