

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



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

MICHAEL MONTEL

W51627

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **February 1, 2022**

DATE OF DECISION: **September 13, 2022**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, 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 that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole.¹ Parole is denied with a review scheduled in two years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On December 11, 1991, in Hampden Superior Court, Michael Montel pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of his estranged wife, 29-year-old Marianne Rose Montel. Mr. Montel was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Six weeks prior to the murder, Michael Montel (age 29) and Marianne had separated due to his violent behavior, which included threatening to kill her, physically assaulting her, and choking her. On April 17, 1991, however, Mr. Montel broke into Marianne's apartment, assaulted her with two knives, and forced her to remain in her bedroom. Their children were in the apartment during these events. The next day, Marianne took the children and went to stay at a friend's house. On April 19, 1991, Marianne was on her way to drop the children at school, when she stopped at her apartment to pick up her son's knapsack. Mr. Montel was not

¹ Two Board Members voted to grant parole to an approved home plan after 1 year in lower custody.

supposed to be there. When they arrived, Marianne told her son to get the knapsack, while she used the bathroom.

Mr. Montel, however, had entered the apartment through the back door and instructed his son to wait in the car. Mr. Montel then proceeded to the bathroom and fatally stabbed Marianne with a fishing knife. After the murder, Mr. Montel went to the car, told the children that their mother was not feeling well, and then dropped them off at school. Later that morning, Mr. Montel went to the Springfield Police Department and told them that he thought he killed his wife.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON FEBRUARY 1, 2022²

Michael Montel, now 60-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on February 1, 2022. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Montel was denied parole after his initial hearing in 2006, and again after his review hearings in 2009, 2012, and 2017. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Montel apologized to Marianne's family for the crime, stating that he felt both sorrow and remorse for his actions. Upon Board Member questioning as to the events leading up to the murder, Mr. Montel described himself as having "abandonment issues." When Marianne pushed him to see a marriage counselor, he reluctantly agreed. At the time, Mr. Montel had been laid off from work, which left him feeling insecure. Although the marriage counselor stated that he should move out, Mr. Montel initially resisted because he thought it was an unnecessary expense after losing his job. Although he had moved out, Mr. Montel later used two knives to open Marianne's locked bedroom door to confront her about her new "boyfriend." He explained that he still had access to the home as he lived there during the week. Mr. Montel stated that when Marianne tried to grab at the two knives, he cut her hands. Mr. Montel claimed that Marianne was not afraid of him because she would regularly act "defiant" and "talk back" to him.

On the day of the murder, Mr. Montel stated that a cab took him to the family home that he believed to be empty. Upon arrival, he saw Marianne's car in the driveway with two of his children inside. He now understands that his decision to enter the home, knowing that Marianne was inside, constituted stalking. Although Mr. Montel stated that his plan was to retrieve his clothes from the home, he did not have an explanation as to how he planned to leave since he dismissed the cab upon seeing his wife's car in the driveway. Once inside, Mr. Montel directed his oldest son to the car to watch his siblings. Mr. Montel claimed that he thought Marianne's "boyfriend" was in the house, so he retrieved a knife from the kitchen and walked around searching for him. Finding no one, Mr. Montel confronted Marianne in the bathroom with knife in hand. He could see that she was afraid. During the confrontation, Mr. Montel stated that he stabbed Marianne several times, but only punctured the skin. On further discussion, Mr. Montel acknowledged that his description of those events, compared to the actual number of serious stab wounds inflicted, minimized what transpired. When pressed by the Board, Mr. Montel admitted that this was a conscious act on his part and that it didn't just "happen."

Since the last hearing, Mr. Montel has continued to work in the metal shop and holds several welding and sheet metal cutting and fabrication certifications. He has completed four programs since the last hearing: Alternatives to Violence, Able Minds, Victim Offender Education

² The entire video recording of Mr. Montel's February 1, 2022 hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

Group (VOEG), and Skill Building for Stress Reduction in November 2018. When Board Members questioned him as to his programming efforts regarding domestic violence, Mr. Montel responded that he now understands why Marianne was scared, as he controlled her through fear and intimidation.

A representative from the Victim Services Unit read into the record a statement in opposition to parole from Marianne's sister. Another sister of Marianne testified in opposition to parole.

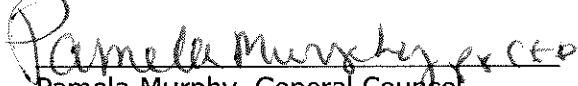
III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Michael Montel has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. On April 19, 1991, Mr. Montel snuck into the home of his estranged wife Marianne Rose Montel, age 29, and stabbed her to death. Although he has made progress by engaging in some programming and [has] exhibited a good adjustment, he still minimizes his behavior and shifts blame to the victim. This was evident at various points in the hearing. The Board remains concerned that although he has engaged in programs, he still lacks insight into his history of domestic violence. Mr. Montel needs to continue to engage in any programming where he could gain insight into domestic violence, anger, and control. The Board remains concerned about Mr. Montel's characterization of the victim as "defiant."

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

Mr. Montel's next appearance before the Board will take place in two years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Montel 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

9/13/22
Date