



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety

PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

NATHANIEL WILLIAMS

W34781

TYPE OF HEARING: **Revocation Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **January 24, 2012**

DATE OF DECISION: **April 30, 2013**

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

DECISION OF THE BOARD: After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying 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 writing, we conclude by unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole at this time. Parole is denied with a review in three years. The next parole hearing will be in January 2015.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On November 30, 1973, Nathaniel Williams and his two co-defendants, Anthony Irving and Terrell Walker, murdered Boston Police Detective John Schroeder during a robbery at the Suffolk Loan Company on Washington Street in Roxbury. He pleaded guilty to one count of second degree murder and four counts of armed robbery on December 2, 1974, in Suffolk Superior Court. He was sentenced to serve five concurrent terms of life in prison.

Mr. Williams, Mr. Irving, and Mr. Walker decided to rob a pawn shop and, on the day of the murder, selected the Suffolk Loan Company. A number of people were in the shop at the time, including the owner, Lawrence Bean, and several employees and customers. Boston Police Detective John Schroeder was also there. One of the men, either Mr. Williams or Mr. Irving, recognized Detective Schroeder to be a police officer even though he was wearing civilian clothes and yelled out, "He is a cop. Get him." Mr. Walker, armed with a handgun, struggled with Detective Schroeder, pushed him, and struck him on the head with the gun. As

Detective Schroeder tried to back off, Mr. Walker shot him once in the neck, perforating his cervical spine and spinal cord.

After Detective Schroeder fell to the ground fatally wounded, Mr. Williams, Mr. Walker, and Mr. Irving ordered employees to unlock the safe. They robbed the store, obtaining watches, jewelry, cash, a handbag, and other valuables. Before leaving, Mr. Walker went over to Detective Schroeder, straddled his body, and pulled his badge holder and money from his pants pocket. He also removed Detective Schroeder's gun, a .38 caliber revolver, and kept it. The three men then fled the store.

Terrell Walker was arrested later that day in a Boston apartment where Detective Schroeder's gun was also found. Anthony Irving and Nathaniel Williams were arrested the following day, December 1, 1973, on a bus in Danville, Virginia. The gun used to shoot Detective Schroeder was found in Mr. Williams' bag.¹ Terrel Walker's first degree murder conviction was overturned by the First Circuit Court of Appeals, and he pleaded guilty to manslaughter and has completed his sentence of 18 to 20 years. Anthony Irving pleaded guilty to second degree murder and was released on parole in March 2005.

II. INSTITUTIONAL & PAROLE HISTORY

Mr. Williams is serving his first incarceration. He was committed to MCI-Cedar Junction on December 3, 1974. He has a total of 25 disciplinary reports, four returns to higher custody and one parole failure. During his return to custody between December 2006 and June 2010 for a parole violation, he incurred one disciplinary report for being out of place which was eventually dismissed. Since his return to custody in May 2011, for a second parole violation, he has not received any disciplinary reports. While at MCI-Concord following his return to custody as a parole violator, Mr. Williams has completed Alternatives to Violence in June 2008 and Correctional Recovery Academy in November 2008. Currently he participates in the Lifers Group, Correctional Recovery Academy, and AA/NA.

Mr. Williams was first paroled on January 31, 2001, resided with his girlfriend, Carole Jamison, and held various jobs. Initially, his parole appeared to be uneventful with no evidence of non-compliance until December 21, 2006 when Boston Police responded to a 911 call for a domestic incident in progress. Officers spoke with Carole Jamison, the victim, who indicated that Mr. Williams had picked her up at work in her motor vehicle and that Mr. Williams had been drinking alcohol. She related they got into a verbal argument when Mr. Williams became angry and slapped her on the right side of her face and exited the vehicle in front of their house. Ms. Jamison further stated that Mr. Williams had keys to the home and she was afraid that he would return to the premises. Officers could not locate Mr. Williams until December 27, 2006, when he was arrested on a warrant for assault and battery stemming from the above incident. The case was later dismissed without prejudice following Ms. Jamison's reluctance to

¹ A fourth person, Ella Mae Ellison, was later charged and convicted of murder for being the getaway driver. Mr. Williams and Mr. Irving testified against her. In November of 1976, however, during the litigation of a motion for a new trial, Mr. Williams and Mr. Irving recanted their earlier testimony. *Commonwealth v. Ellison*, 376 Mass. 1, 15 (1978). The Supreme Judicial Court ultimately overturned the conviction because of failure to disclose exculpatory evidence, but noted that the motion judge did not believe the recantation and opined that "Williams and Irving emerge as very willing to lie under oath." *Id.* at 16, 19, 27.

testify against Mr. Williams. On January 9, 2007, Mr. Williams' parole was revoked due to his arrest and alcohol use and he was re-incarcerated for three years.

On June 11, 2010, Mr. Williams was afforded a second opportunity on parole and re-paroled to John Festa's Re-entry House in East Boston. From the outset Mr. Williams had difficulty with finances, applying for SSI/SSDI and collecting food stamps. His requests to live with or near Carole Jamison were denied. He was unsatisfied with his commute to the Long Island Shelter and complained of physical inability to work since his 2007 heart attack. He eventually rented an apartment in Dorchester, attended AA/NA 3 times per week, and engaged in one-on-one counseling. In reality, however, his support system, his resolve, his adjustment, and his overall re-integration in the community were deteriorating.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Williams violated parole on April 17, 2011, by turning to crack cocaine. He indicates he was depressed, in part due to lack of support. He stated a neighbor came by and asked him to drive her to get some crack cocaine. He did so and then drove out to Castle Island to take the drugs. A police officer knocked on his car window and observed him taking the drugs. He was summonsed to court. Williams failed to report any of this to his parole officer until May 11, 2011, at his third meeting with his parole officer since the incident. He claimed this was the only incident involving drugs during this parole.

III. PAROLE HEARING ON JANUARY 24, 2012

Nathaniel Williams's appearance before the Parole Board served to reveal a number of deficiencies in his preparation for and his performance on parole. Board members discussed the gravity of his crime, the vicious murder of a Boston Police Officer, the circumstances and some of the factors leading up to the crime, and his efforts at rehabilitation. Although he appeared to display some insight into reasons for his parole failures, he presented as passive and depressed. In fact, upon being questioned, Mr. Williams admitted to depression and anxiety as well as his failure to rely on his support system as significant contributing factors to his parole failures.

Mr. Williams said that during the 2006 domestic violence incident, "I got angry too, I got heated, I didn't use what I learned." Discussing his April 2011 relapse, he said that "I messed up, I made a bad decision." He said that he used an NA sponsor on his first parole and "that was helpful." He admitted he did not have an NA sponsor for his second parole. A Board Member noted that Mr. Williams "is vulnerable to stress; you have made bad decisions under stress; your stress will be increasing because health problems affect your ability to work, which was your primary stress-reducer." Mr. Williams cried in describing his living circumstances on parole, and said "I know I don't do well living by myself." Mr. Williams was questioned at length regarding his unsatisfactory performance on parole and while he pointed out certain contributing factors, his explanations were not reassuring. Although Mr. Williams referenced a number of people and resources that were available to him, he was unable to adequately explain why he failed to utilize this community support to succeed on parole.

Suffolk Assistant District Attorney Charles Bartoloni testified in opposition to parole. Boston Police Deputy Superintendent Kevin Buckley testified in opposition and read a letter of opposition from Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis. Detective Schroeder's nephew spoke in opposition to parole. Caleb Newman-Polk, a psychologist who evaluated Nathaniel

Williams, testified in support of parole. He said that Mr. Williams suffered from anxiety and depression and needed a structured environment and a psychopharmacological evaluation for parole success.


IV. DECISION

Nathaniel Williams served 27 years on five concurrent life sentences before receiving parole in January 2001. He violated that parole with a domestic violence incident involving alcohol consumption in December 2006. Mr. Williams received a second parole in June 2010 which resulted in revocation for use of crack cocaine in April 2011. He has now served over 32 years on the five life sentences.

Mr. Williams violated parole twice with substance abuse relapse. The relapses were associated with other issues that were evidently triggers for relapse. At his parole hearing, Mr. Williams showed that he still has considerable work to do in addressing his various issues, including lack of motivation and productivity on parole.

The standard we apply in assessing candidates for parole is set out in 120 C.M.R. 300.04, which provides that, "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." Applying that appropriately high standard here, the Board finds that Mr. Williams is not a suitable candidate for parole. Accordingly, parole is denied. The review will be in three years, during which time Mr. Williams needs to continue with substance abuse and mental health treatment, and prepare a comprehensive parole plan that provides considerable structure and support for his many needs.

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.


Janis DiLoreto Noble, General Counsel


Date