



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**PHILLIP PIZZO**

**W41132**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** June 25, 2020

**DATE OF DECISION:** July 13, 2021

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Karen McCarthy, 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 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.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

Phillip Pizzo is serving concurrent life sentences stemming from several sexually motivated crimes in Middlesex and Essex counties between August 12, 1983, and January 19, 1984. At the time, he was 34 years old. On November 6, 1984, Mr. Pizzo pleaded guilty to the Middlesex offenses in Middlesex Superior Court. He was sentenced to eight concurrent life terms for the offenses of aggravated rape, armed robbery while masked, and armed robbery. These offenses involved five separate victims<sup>1</sup> and occurred on five different days. Mr. Pizzo initially assaulted his victims at four different shopping malls: Meadow Glen Mall, South Shore Shopping Plaza, Woburn Mall, and Clover Leaf Marketplace in Natick.

<sup>1</sup> The identities of the victims will be kept confidential, pursuant to G.L. c. 265, § 24C, as they are each the victims of crimes involving sexual assault. Further, G.L. c. 127, § 130 provides that portions of a parole Record of Decision may be withheld to preserve confidentiality.

Mr. Pizzo also pleaded guilty to similar offenses in Essex County. Those offenses occurred on December 12, 1983, and January 13, 1984, and involved two different women. Both offenses occurred at the North Shore Shopping Center in Peabody. Consequently, Mr. Pizzo received three life sentences in connection with those cases for the offenses of aggravated rape and armed robbery. Subsequently, in 1985, Mr. Pizzo was found to be a Sexually Dangerous Person. He was committed for one day to life to the Massachusetts Treatment Center (MTC). In 2009, 24 years later, Mr. Pizzo was no longer found to be a Sexually Dangerous Person and was transferred to state prison to serve his sentences. Mr. Pizzo is currently serving his concurrent life sentences and became parole eligible in 2009.

In September 1985, the MTC completed an intake evaluation in which Mr. Pizzo's criminal modus operandi was described as follows: Phillip Pizzo would accost a woman in her late teens or early twenties in various shopping malls in the Boston area. As the victim got into her car, Mr. Pizzo (who was wearing a ski mask) would open the car door and, while holding a knife to the victim's throat, push the victim to the passenger's seat. He would then put the ski mask over the victim's face and tie her hands behind her back. Mr. Pizzo would reassure the woman that he was not going to harm her; rather, he claimed that he just wanted money. He would, in fact, take any money she had. Mr. Pizzo then drove the victim's car to his vehicle, at which point they drove in his car to his Westford home. During the ride, Mr. Pizzo would ask the victim about her personal life. Several victims were pinched in the breast and genital areas. In the house, Mr. Pizzo would generally force the victim to drink alcohol and then take her to the bedroom. He would cover his face with a mask and remove the ski mask from the victim's face. Mr. Pizzo would then rape and sodomize her. After, he would have the victim take a shower and then return her to the shopping mall from where she had been abducted.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JUNE 25, 2020**

Phillip Pizzo, now 70-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on June 25, 2020, for a review hearing. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Pizzo was denied parole after his hearings in 2010 and 2015. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Pizzo expressed his remorse for the crimes he committed, as well as the emotional and physical harm he inflicted upon his victims. He described how his distorted thoughts, and the anger he harbored towards women, were the precipitants of the crimes he committed.

Mr. Pizzo provided the Board with an overview of the offense that is consistent with the facts of the Commonwealth. Although inconsistent with his previous testimony, Mr. Pizzo stated that he began to devalue women at an early age, as he perceived his mother and his aunts to be overbearing. He offered testimony as to how his mistrust grew when the women in his life would give him enemas. Mr. Pizzo felt as if he had been sexually abused. Mr. Pizzo also described the verbal and emotional abuse he was subjected to by his father. His perception of abuse led to a lack of self-esteem and sense of worthlessness. Around age 18, Mr. Pizzo began to experience uncontrollable urges to expose himself to women. Two months before the first of a series of aggravated rapes and armed robberies (while masked) occurred, Mr. Pizzo's fiancée broke off their engagement. He described how distorted thoughts, lack of self-esteem, and anger toward women affected his decision making.

Mr. Pizzo discussed his cycle of deviant behavior, as well as his manipulation of family and friends. He committed sexual offenses that were planned, consisting of specific patterns and routines. Seated in his car and drinking alcohol in a mall parking lot, Mr. Pizzo obsessed over his ex-fiancée. Mr. Pizzo's anger and frustration culminated in the commission of heinous crimes, where he wanted his victims to feel his pain. During the assaults, he would force his victims to consume alcohol. Mr. Pizzo admitted to 10 aggravated rapes, seven of which he was convicted of. In addition, he attempted sexual assaults of other victims. The Board raised concern as to whether Mr. Pizzo fully grasped the impact of his crimes, as he presented as mechanical, rehearsed, and void of emotion.

The Board noted that his overall institutional adjustment has been positive. The Board addressed Mr. Pizzo's rehabilitative efforts, where he remains active in psycho-educational programming. He has completed several other programs to include Emotional Awareness and Jericho Circle. He is also a facilitator for Alternatives to Violence. Mr. Pizzo believes that, due to his participation in treatment and programming, he no longer has the need to harm others. He informed the Board that his last sexually deviant fantasy occurred in the mid 1990's. The Board remained concerned, however, that Mr. Pizzo has yet to participate in substance abuse education treatment and programming. As recently as 2015, Mr. Pizzo adamantly refuted the fact that his consumption of alcohol gave him the courage to commit such heinous crimes. It was only after his last hearing that Mr. Pizzo became active in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Board considered oral testimony in opposition to parole from one of the victims. Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Adrienne Lynch and Essex County Assistant District Attorney Elin Graydon provided testimony in opposition to parole.

### **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Phillip Pizzo has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Pizzo is serving concurrent life sentences stemming from several sexually motivated crimes in Middlesex and Essex counties between August 12, 1983, and January 19, 1984. During this time, he demonstrated a premeditated pattern [of] offending. He was declared a "Sexually Dangerous Person" in 1985 and received a civil commitment of one day to life. In 2009, after 24 years, he was discharged from this civil commitment. In 2010, he completed the Sex Offender Treatment [Program]. Despite the role alcohol played in his offending, he has yet to fully engage in substance abuse education/treatment and only became active in AA within the past four years. At various points in the hearing, he became angered and defensive. Mr. Pizzo's release on parole supervision remains incompatible with the welfare of society.

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. Pizzo'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. Pizzo's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Pizzo's case,

the Board is of the opinion that Phillip Pizzo is not rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Pizzo'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. Pizzo 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.*

  
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Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

2/13/2021  
Date