

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



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

RAFAEL GUZMAN

W92062

TYPE OF HEARING: **Initial Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **November 30, 2021**

DATE OF DECISION: **September 12, 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 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 April 30, 2008, in Hampden Superior Court, Rafael Guzman pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of 31-year-old Ronnie Hannas and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

In the early morning hours of December 7, 2006, Springfield police responded to a call regarding a shooting. Officers located Ronnie Hannas inside an apartment, suffering from multiple gunshots wounds. He was transported to the hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. During the investigation, police learned of a feud between Mr. Hannas and occupants of the same apartment building where he was shot. Two Hispanic males had a confrontation with Mr. Hannas and another individual. During this confrontation, the taller of the two males shot Mr. Hannas. Three witnesses positively identified Mr. Guzman's co-defendant as the shorter of the two males.

After Mr. Guzman's co-defendant was arrested, he told police that his cousin, Rafael Guzman, had been arguing with Mr. Hannas over drugs. The co-defendant stated that Mr. Guzman was under the influence of drugs and shot Mr. Hannas. Mr. Guzman was subsequently arrested and charged with murder.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON NOVEMBER 30, 2021¹

Rafael Guzman, now 46-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for an initial hearing on November 30, 2021. He was represented by student attorneys from Northeastern University School of Law. In his opening statement, Mr. Guzman accepted full responsibility for the murder, citing his "pervasive heroin addiction that controlled most of his life" as the reason he killed Mr. Hannas. Mr. Guzman stated that he was under the influence of heroin, which caused him to be paranoid, and reacted with violence when he saw Mr. Hannas with a gun. Mr. Guzman further explained that he experienced a troubled childhood in Puerto Rico, where violence at a young age was encouraged, so as not to appear weak. The development of these "learned behaviors" contributed to his criminal behavior.

Prior to his arrest, as well as during his incarceration, Mr. Guzman has struggled with substance use disorder. He reports developing a suboxone addiction in 2017. The Board noted his accrual of eight disciplinary reports related to substance use. In total, he has accumulated 21 disciplinary infractions and has been returned to higher custody twice. Throughout his incarceration, Mr. Guzman engaged in programming and educational courses, including Anger Strategies, General Population Maintenance, Adult Basic Education, and Family Social Unit. He is on the waitlist for CRA. Mr. Guzman reports that he is involved in counseling to manage his anxiety disorder.

The Board considered the testimony of Mr. Guzman's mother and brother in support of parole. The Board also considered the testimony of Mr. Hannas' sister in opposition to parole.

III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Rafael Guzman has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. On December 6, 2006, 30-year-old Ronnie Guzman and his co-defendant were involved in the shooting of Ronnie Hannas in Springfield, Massachusetts. This is Mr. Guzman's first parole hearing. He has been returned to higher custody on two occasions and has incurred a disciplinary report as recently as 2019, for fighting. He admitted to using suboxone from 2012 to 2019. Mr. Guzman self-reported that he would like to get his GED in English and complete CRA and the Board encourages him to do so. Mr. Guzman reported that he has been program-involved since his transfer to Concord in 2017.

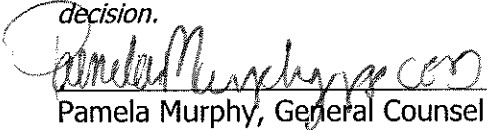
The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the 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

¹ The entire video recording of Mr. Guzman's November 30, 2021 hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

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

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

9/12/12
Date