

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**RAMON DEJESUS**

**W65419**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** July 28, 2020

**DATE OF DECISION:** July 8, 2021

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

**DECISION OF 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 in three years from the date of the hearing.<sup>1</sup>

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On October 19, 1998, in Suffolk Superior Court, Ramon DeJesus pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of Elizabeth Cora. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On January 4, 1996, Ramon DeJesus (age 45) went to the apartment where his estranged wife, Elizabeth Cora (age 26), was staying with their children. While Ms. Cora was out for the evening, Mr. DeJesus engaged in drinking and drug use. When she returned to the apartment at around 4 a.m., on January 5, an argument ensued between them. Mr. DeJesus then left the apartment. He returned several hours later and, again, argued with Ms. Cora. At some point, he chased Ms. Cora into a bedroom and shot her twice, once in the right temple and once in the left

<sup>1</sup> One Board Member voted to schedule a review hearing in two years.

breast. Two of their children, a four-year-old and a three-year-old, witnessed the murder. After Mr. DeJesus fled the apartment, he was confronted by police officers who were responding to a call that shots had been fired. Police officers witnessed Mr. DeJesus throw a gun across the street. After he was placed in custody, Mr. DeJesus voluntarily made the statement, "I shot the bitch. I hope the bitch is dead." Ms. Cora had an active restraining order against Mr. DeJesus on the day of the murder.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JULY 28, 2020**

On July 28, 2020, Ramon DeJesus, now 70-years-old, appeared before the Massachusetts Parole Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Yefim Luvish and was assisted by a Spanish interpreter. Mr. DeJesus had been denied parole after his initial hearing in 2013.<sup>2</sup> In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. DeJesus expressed his remorse for having taken the life of his wife, who was the "mother of [his] kids," and for the "harm that [he] caused [his] children and [his] loved ones." For the first time, Mr. DeJesus admitted to the Board that the murder was not an "accident" caused by his wife; rather, he (alone) was responsible for her death.

Mr. DeJesus described a tumultuous relationship with Ms. Cora, marked by substance abuse, jealousy, and domestic violence. He stated that the relationship problems were intertwined with their alcohol and drug use. Mr. DeJesus admitted that, despite his own infidelities, his abusive behavior was fueled by jealousy. Even after they were estranged, he stated that he did not want Ms. Cora to be with any other man. Nonetheless, Mr. DeJesus did not appear fully forthcoming about his history of domestic violence. When the Board inquired about two restraining orders that Ms. Cora had obtained against him, Mr. DeJesus first stated that the restraining orders were sought because of "the problem of using drugs and alcohol." Only after additional inquiries were made did he admit that there had been a history of violence, and that Ms. Cora had been the victim of his 1995 assault and battery conviction. Although he claimed to have "only" struck Ms. Cora on two occasions, Mr. DeJesus admitted that she regularly called the police to report that he hit her. When a Board Member further inquired about these emergency calls, Mr. DeJesus stated that Ms. Cora had been "making it up," and that he "[did not] know what [her] problem [was]." A Board Member also voiced concern about witness testimony, which described how Mr. DeJesus regularly stated that he was going to kill Ms. Cora. Mr. DeJesus denied making those statements or threatening to cause her physical harm.

When Board Members questioned him as to the governing offense, Mr. DeJesus admitted that on the day of the murder, he had been drinking, abusing cocaine, and ingesting prescription pills. He went to the apartment, where Ms. Cora and his children were staying, and admitted to being "very angry" when he learned that she had gone out for the evening. He believed that Ms. Cora was "with another man." Nonetheless, Mr. DeJesus stayed in the apartment, where he used drugs and alcohol until 4 a.m., when Ms. Cora returned. Mr. DeJesus confessed to arguing with Ms. Cora and to shooting her in the chest and head, after which he fled from the home. He admitted that when he was stopped by police, he said, "I hope that bitch is dead." When a Board Member questioned him as to whether one of the residents had asked him to leave the apartment prior to the shooting, Mr. DeJesus claimed that he could not remember. He stated that,

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. DeJesus was originally scheduled to appear before the Board for a review hearing in 2018. However, he requested a postponement of his hearing, so that his attorney could secure funds for an expert.

immediately preceding the shooting, Ms. Cora insulted him by calling him a name that (in his culture) is considered to be the "meanest word that a woman can throw [at] a man."

Several Board Members expressed concern about the children in the home at the time of the murder. Mr. DeJesus stated that because of his level of intoxication, he did not remember if they witnessed the murder. Although he claims to have told his children that he intentionally shot Ms. Cora, Mr. DeJesus was evasive in providing details about this confession. The Board expressed concern over Mr. DeJesus' shifting motive behind the murder. Since his 2013 hearing, when he claimed that the murder was an "accident" caused by Ms. Cora, Mr. DeJesus has changed his account on two occasions. Given Mr. DeJesus' history with substance abuse, a Board Member noted the irony behind his stated motive in 2018, when he said that he murdered Ms. Cora because of her substance abuse issues and her neglect of their children. Several Board Members noted the ongoing irony behind his most recent account where, despite his own infidelities, Mr. DeJesus now claims that his jealousy of Ms. Cora's relationships drove him to kill her.

The Board discussed Mr. DeJesus' institutional adjustment and expressed concern about his mental health history. Mr. DeJesus admitted to seeing a mental health professional, but explained that, with the permission of his mental health provider, he had stopped taking prescription medication seven years ago as it caused him to feel "nervous" and "angry." Several Board Members noted that Mr. DeJesus would benefit from continuing both counseling and mental health treatment. Mr. DeJesus, however, resisted the need for any mental health treatment, claiming that he had been misdiagnosed. Yet, Mr. DeJesus acknowledged that he "heard voices" as recently as four years ago. Although Mr. DeJesus recently completed Criminal Thinking, a Board Member inquired as to whether his delay in completing this program could be attributed to his reluctance in fully acknowledging and accepting his own violence issues – a position that Mr. DeJesus rejected, stating that he had "been facing [his] violence issues for a long time."

The Board considered testimony from Dr. Frank DiCataldo. The Board also considered testimony in support of parole from Mr. DeJesus' sister and two of his daughters.

### **III. DECISION**

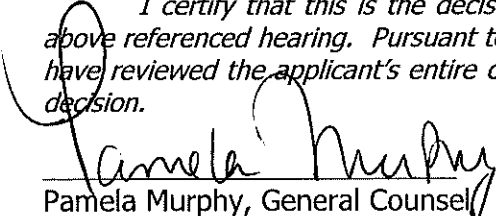
The Board is of the opinion that Ramon DeJesus has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. DeJesus has served 24 years for the murder of his estranged common-law wife, Elizabeth Cora. Mr. DeJesus has provided various versions of the governing offense and the history of domestic violence within the relationship. Mr. DeJesus is encouraged to pursue treatment/programming to address his criminal thinking, victim impact, and empathy. Mr. DeJesus should also accept the recommendations of Dr. DiCataldo to include applying for DMH (Department of Mental Health) services and comply[ing] with mental health provider recommendations.

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

Mr. DeJesus' next appearance before the Board will take place in three years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages him to continue working towards 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

7/8/2021  
Date