



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

12 Mercer Road
Natick, Massachusetts 01760



Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Terrence M. Reidy
Secretary

Telephone: (508)-650-4500

Facsimile: (508)-650-4599

Tonomey A. Coleman
Acting Chair

Lian Hogan
Executive Director

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

RICHARD DESROSIER
W49873

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **April 22, 2025**

DATE OF DECISION: **September 10, 2025**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz¹

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in 3 years from the date of the hearing.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On February 5, 1991, in Worcester Superior Court, Richard Desrosiers pleaded guilty to murder in the second-degree for the death of Karen Barriere. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Parole was denied after an initial hearing in 2005, and after his review hearings in 2010, 2015, and 2020.

On April 22, 2025, Richard Desrosiers appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney John Rull. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Richard Desrosiers's April 22, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: In the late afternoon of April 16, 1990, Richard Desrosiers (age 22), Karen Barriere, a friend of Mr. Desrosiers (Witness #1), and a juvenile female met in downtown Worcester. The foursome pooled their money and purchased two large bottles of beer and a half gallon of vodka. They proceeded to the roof of Union Station (an abandoned railroad depot), where they drank the beer and most of the vodka. They split off into couples. Witness #1 and the juvenile went to the other side of the roof, where they could neither see nor hear Mr. Desrosiers and Ms. Barriere. When Witness #1 later went back to check on them, Mr. Desrosiers

¹ Board Members Ortiz and Coleman were not present for the hearing, but they reviewed the video recording and the entirety of the file prior to vote. Former Chair Hurley participated in the hearing, but she departed the Board prior to the vote and decision.

² Two Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in 2 years.

told him, "Don't come near here." Witness #1 approached anyway and saw Ms. Barriere, lying naked on the roof, with her upper torso and head engulfed in flames. He also observed Mr. Desrosiers with blood on his hands and clothing. Witness #1 then screamed at Mr. Desrosiers, to which Mr. Desrosiers replied, "She's dead. She wouldn't [have sex] with me, so I killed her." Mr. Desrosiers threatened Witness #1 by telling him not to report the murder. Despite the threat, Witness #1 fled the building and reported what he had seen to the police. He took the officers to the scene, where they found Ms. Barriere's body on the lower level of the roof. Her body had been thrown from an opening in the roof's upper level to a concrete area 19 feet below. The medical examiner determined that Ms. Barriere died from blunt force trauma, thermal injury to the neck, and smoke inhalation. Although her facial features were burned beyond recognition, her identity was confirmed through fingerprints.

Several hours after the murder, the police found Mr. Desrosiers at his parents' house. Shortly thereafter, he was charged with murder. Subsequent investigation revealed that on the evening of the murder, Mr. Desrosiers told several people that he had killed and burned someone that night. Mr. Desrosiers, however, also stated that he had no recollection of killing Ms. Barriere due to an alcohol-induced blackout.

APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. In making this determination, the Board takes into consideration an inmate's institutional behavior, their participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize the inmate's risk of recidivism. M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. The Board also considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board. (if applicable).

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Mr. Desrosiers appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He is still refusing to enroll in Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP). While he has engaged in non-Sex Offender Programming, his failure to participate in Sex Offender Programming is problematic for the Board considering the underlying crime. The Board would consider alternatives to SOTP, but does find that Mr. Desrosiers needs to address the sexually violent nature of his crime through individual therapy and group therapy. Mr. Desrosiers' refusal to acknowledge the sexually motivating factors of his crime concerns the Board and poses an obstacle to full rehabilitation. In rendering their decision, the Board considered testimony in support of parole from Mr. Desrosiers' family. The Board considered opposition statements provided by Worcester County ADA Jesse Crane and Worcester County ADA Joshua Lopez. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Richard Desrosiers has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

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.



Tonomey A. Coleman, Acting Chair

Date

9/10/25