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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

RICHARD SEYMOUR
W42787

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: February 2, 2016

DATE OF DECISION: June 20, 2016

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Ina Howard-Hogan, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe

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 five years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On September 23, 1986, in Middlesex Superior Court, Richard Seymour pled guilty to the second degree murder of his son Patrick. Mr. Seymour also pled guilty to three counts of kidnapping, as well as three counts of assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon. A sentence of life in prison, with the possibility of parole, was imposed on Mr. Seymour for the murder of his son. Mr. Seymour was also sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not more than 5 years and not less than 4 years for each of his convictions of kidnapping and assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon. All terms of imprisonment imposed on Mr. Seymour were ordered to be run concurrent with his life sentence.

Patrick Seymour, age 18, was beaten to death on January 20, 1986 by his father Richard Seymour in the family's Billerica residence. Mr. Seymour killed his son in a sustained and vicious attack that escalated from an apparently routine disagreement. Mr. Seymour used daily physical violence and emotional abuse to control his wife and two teenage children. Mr.

Seymour also abused alcohol and cocaine every day. Acting out a pattern of extraordinary domestic violence fueled by alcohol and cocaine, Richard Seymour used his fists, a propane gas tank, and a hammer to beat his son to death. Crime scene and autopsy evidence show that Mr. Seymour struck Patrick with the gas tank at least three times in the back of the head, while Patrick was either on his knees or lying on the ground. Mr. Seymour inflicted the hammer blows with such force that he bashed through his son's skull and penetrated his brain. Mr. Seymour then tied his hands and legs, dragged him behind a workbench, and covered him with blankets and boxes. The evidence supports the conclusion that Patrick was still alive, albeit in the process of dying, when Mr. Seymour bound and dragged him.

Mr. Seymour's familial crimes continued that evening when his wife and teenage daughter arrived home approximately two hours after the murder; a female friend of the daughter accompanied them. Mr. Seymour took a sustained series of violent actions against his wife, his daughter, and his daughter's friend. With a large kitchen knife in hand, Mr. Seymour threatened them, chased them, physically assaulted them, and tied them up. He stuffed socks in the mouths of his daughter and her friend. His violence included holding the knife to his daughter's throat and threatening to kill her, and cutting his wife with the knife. Mr. Seymour fled only after he realized that the two teenage girls had freed themselves from their bindings and had run from the house. Mr. Seymour was apprehended the next day.

By the time of the murder, Mr. Seymour had persisted for many years with alcohol abuse, cocaine abuse, and violence. Mr. Seymour was known in the community for his anger and violence, which erupted against people he encountered in his construction business or those that crossed him in bars he frequented. Most tragically, he terrorized his wife and two children with verbal abuse, uncontrolled and unprecipitated rage, intimidation, threats, and frequent physical violence.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON FEBRUARY 2, 2016

Mr. Seymour, now 66-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on February 2, 2016 for a review hearing and was represented by Student Attorney Jeremy Mallin. This was his fourth appearance before the Board since February 2001. Mr. Seymour's subsequent appearances before the Board, in 2006 and 2011, also resulted in the denial of parole.

In Mr. Seymour's opening statement, he apologized for his actions and expressed his remorse. During the course of the hearing, he spoke about the day of the murder. According to Mr. Seymour, he killed his son Patrick after a verbal argument escalated into a physical confrontation. Mr. Seymour explained to the Board that he was at his home on the morning of Patrick's murder, where he had been drinking beer and vodka and consuming cocaine. After refusing Patrick's request to borrow his truck, Mr. Seymour and Patrick began to argue verbally. The verbal argument between Mr. Seymour and his son became a physical confrontation when Mr. Seymour pushed Patrick down a flight of stairs. The fight continued in the basement of the home. Mr. Seymour and Patrick continued to fight, throwing objects at each other in the basement. At some point, Mr. Seymour picked up a hammer and struck Patrick with it. He then wrapped wire around Patrick's legs.

After Mr. Seymour heard noises coming from the upper floors of the home, he went upstairs and threatened his wife, daughter, and daughter's friend with a knife. He attempted to imprison all three women in the master bedroom with physical restraints, but was unable to do so when his wife escaped to the driveway. Mr. Seymour chased after his wife, but could not catch her. When he returned to the bedroom, he found that his daughter and her friend had removed their restraints and fled the home. Mr. Seymour then left the home, as well.

When confronted with contradictory facts, as testified to by his daughter before a Middlesex County Grand Jury, Mr. Seymour told the Board that he had no memory of the additional acts of violence that his daughter alleged. These acts included stuffing a sock in his daughter's mouth and placing a knife to her throat, among other things. Mr. Seymour, however, admitted that he does not know what would have happened to his wife, daughter, and his daughter's friend if they had not been able to escape on the day he murdered his son.

The Board questioned Mr. Seymour about his behavior prior to, and during, his incarceration. According to Mr. Seymour, he started drinking in high school. Mr. Seymour's drinking then escalated after he started working in the construction industry. Mr. Seymour explained that drinking socially with co-workers was a way he could promote his career, as it led him to more lucrative work opportunities. During his time in custody, Mr. Seymour told the Board that he pursued education. He has also refrained from drinking alcohol, with the exception of the first few years of his incarceration. Mr. Seymour also engaged in numerous programs during his time in custody. He discussed his experiences in Jericho Circle, as well as that of another program, Parents of Murdered Children.

The Board considered testimony from Mr. Seymour's friends and former attorney, all of whom expressed support for his release. The Board also received and considered testimony from Patrick Seymour's mother, sister, aunts, and his mother's husband, all of whom expressed opposition to Mr. Seymour's parole. Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Crystal Lyons also expressed opposition to Mr. Seymour's parole.

III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Seymour has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. The Board believes that a longer period of positive institutional adjustment would be beneficial to Mr. Seymour's rehabilitation.

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

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


Gloriann Moroney, General Counsel

6/20/16
Date