



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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AMENDED RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

RICHARD SEYMOUR
W42787

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **February 29, 2024**

DATE OF DECISION: **April 30, 2024**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in two years from the date of the hearing.¹

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On September 23, 1986, in Middlesex Superior Court, Richard Seymour pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of his son, Patrick Seymour. Mr. Seymour also pleaded 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. He 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 run concurrently with his life sentence.

Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2001 and after review hearings in 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021. On February 29, 2024, Richard Seymour appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by two student attorneys from the Harvard Prison Legal Assistance Project under the supervision of Attorney John Fitzpatrick. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Mr. Seymour's, February 29, 2024 hearing.

¹ One Board Member voted to deny parole with a review in three years from the date of the hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: Patrick Seymour (age 18), was beaten to death on January 20, 1986, by his father, Richard Seymour (age 36), in the family's Billerica residence. Mr. Seymour killed his son in a sustained and vicious attack that escalated from an apparently routine disagreement over the use of a vehicle. Mr. Seymour used his fists, a propane gas tank, and a hammer to beat his son to death. Crime scene and autopsy evidence showed 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 broke through his son's skull and penetrated his brain. Mr. Seymour then tied Patrick's hands and legs, dragged him behind a workbench, and covered him with blankets and boxes. The evidence supports that Patrick was still alive, albeit dying, when Mr. Seymour bound and dragged him. Mr. Seymour then showered and changed his clothes.

Mr. Seymour's wife, teenage daughter, and a female friend arrived home approximately two hours after the murder. Mr. Seymour's daughter discovered the victim's body. With a large kitchen knife in hand, Mr. Seymour threatened the three women. He chased them, physically assaulted them, and then tied them up. He stuffed socks in the mouths of his daughter and her friend. He held the knife up to his daughter's throat and threatened to kill her. He proceeded to cut his wife with the knife. Mr. Seymour fled the scene, only after he realized that the two teenage girls had freed themselves and escaped. He was apprehended shortly thereafter.

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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the incarcerated individual'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: This is Mr. Seymour's sixth appearance before the Board. He is now 74-years-old. The Board has consistently encouraged Mr. Seymour to engage in domestic violence treatment in hopes that he would gain insight into his long pattern of significant abuse and the harm he caused his family and other victims. He has yet to do so. The Board acknowledges the limited programming specific to domestic violence within the Department of Correction; however, he is now aware of what opportunities he can avail himself of, such as ACCI Correspondence Courses and Victim Impact programming. Mr. Seymour has done well addressing his addiction. He is 30 years sober. He has also excelled academically, achieving his bachelor's and master's degrees. The family gave compelling testimony concerning the history of abuse and the trauma they continue to endure. Mr. Seymour indicated during the hearing that he was going to engage in domestic violence programming that he recently learned was available. The Board will reconsider upon completion of domestic violence and victim impact programming. Five people spoke in support of Mr. Seymour. Four people spoke in opposition. Middlesex County ADA DeBlander provided testimony in opposition.

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.


Tina M. Hurley, Chair

4/30/24
Date