



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

RICHARD SEYMOUR
W42787

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing
DATE OF HEARING: February 4, 2021
DATE OF DECISION: December 6, 2021

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Karen McCarthy, 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 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.¹

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

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.

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 over the use of a

¹ Three Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in two years from the date of the hearing.

vehicle. Richard 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.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON FEBRUARY 4, 2021

Richard Seymour, now 71-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on February 4, 2021, for a review hearing. He was represented by law students Kathleen Pritchard and Erica Tracewell under the supervision of Attorney Patricia Garin. Mr. Seymour was denied parole after his initial hearing in 2001, and after his review hearings in 2006, 2011, and 2016. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Seymour apologized for the murder of his son, acknowledging that he robbed him of "a long and beautiful life." He also apologized to his wife and daughter for years of sustained abuse and for his actions on the day of Patrick Seymour's death.

When Board Members questioned him as to the governing offense, Mr. Seymour admitted that, in the years leading up to his son's murder, he had frequently abused his family members. He also admitted to extensive use of both alcohol and cocaine in the years preceding the governing offense. On the day of the crime, Mr. Seymour began using both substances early on, as he was frustrated that he could not accomplish his tasks since it was a holiday. When his son Patrick asked to use his truck, Mr. Seymour stated that he refused. Other than "to be dominant," Mr. Seymour did not identify any additional reason for his refusal. Patrick Seymour asked a second time to use the truck and, again, Mr. Seymour refused. This time, however, the refusal escalated into an argument. The argument between Richard and Patrick Seymour became physical, and the men pushed one another. Mr. Seymour stated that he hit Patrick with his hands and struck him with several objects, including a propane gas tank. He claims that he does not remember striking Patrick with a hammer since he "blacked out" for most of the incident.

Mr. Seymour admitted that he concealed his son's body behind a workbench in the family home and then cleaned himself up. When his wife, daughter, and his daughter's friend returned, Mr. Seymour acknowledged that his daughter located the victim's body. Explaining that he wanted to inform his wife of their son's death, Mr. Seymour attempted to control the situation by getting "the girls" to be quiet. He claims to have no memory of harming his daughter and her friend or of confining the women. In contrast to his testimony at his 2016 hearing, where he stated that he did not know what he would have done had the women not escaped the restraints he placed on them, Mr. Seymour now claims that he had no intention of harming them. When asked about the change in his response, Mr. Seymour stated that he knew "in [his] heart" that he did not intend to hurt them.

Mr. Seymour expressed remorse for his son's murder, calling it "the worse crime a man could commit." He reported that his participation in Parents of Murdered Children, completed in the early 1990s, as well as his 2018 participation in the Peace Program, have assisted him in quelling his anger and reducing his capacity for violence. The Board noted that Mr. Seymour has obtained both a bachelor's and master's degree, while incarcerated. The Board further noted his continual involvement in work opportunities, as well as his relative lack of disciplinary reports. Although Board Members acknowledged Mr. Seymour's participation in several other programs, they remain concerned as to his lack of programming efforts regarding victim empathy and domestic violence.

Upon Board Member questioning, Mr. Seymour stated that he began using alcohol and marijuana as a teen and then proceeded to use cocaine as an adult. Further, Mr. Seymour stated that he used alcohol and cocaine on a near-daily basis, admitting that he was under the influence at the time he committed the murder. While incarcerated, Mr. Seymour reported that he attended Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings regularly (prior to pandemic-related suspension of the meetings) in order to continue to address his recovery. He stated that he no longer has "a thought" regarding drugs or alcohol.

The Board considered the testimony of family members, friends, and colleagues in support of parole. The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from family members of Patrick Seymour. The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Ashley Mostrangelo. The Board considered letters in opposition to parole, including a letter submitted by Middlesex Assistant District Attorney Adrienne Lynch, as well as the Billerica Police Department.

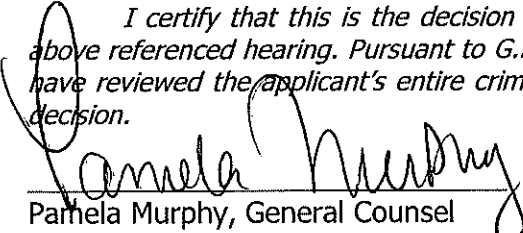
III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Richard Seymour has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Seymour has served approximately 34 years for the brutal murder of his 18-year-old son Patrick Seymour. Mr. Seymour appears to minimize his criminal culpability leading up to the murder. He has yet to address his history of domestic violence. Mr. Seymour should pursue treatment/programming in the areas of domestic violence, victim impact, and empathy.

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 opinion that Richard Seymour is not rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Seymour'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. Seymour 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

12/6/2021
Date