



Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Daniel Bennett
Secretary

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

12 Mercer Road
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

Telephone # (508) 650-4500
Facsimile # (508) 650-4599



Charlene Bonner
Chairperson

Janis DiLoreto Smith
Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

SALAH SHAKOOR

W33864

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing after Revocation

DATE OF HEARING: February 19, 2015

DATE OF DECISION: April 15, 2015

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Lee Gartenberg, 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, 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 hearing in three years from the date of this hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On November 14, 1972, in Suffolk Superior Court, Salah Shakoor was found guilty of the second degree murder of John Piotti and was sentenced to life in prison. Less than a week later, Shakoor pleaded guilty to eight counts of armed robbery and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. He received eight 20 to 30 year sentences and one 9 to 10 year sentence respectively.

On May 5, 1972, Salah Shakoor (FKA James Coar, hereinafter "Shakoor") and his co-defendant, Julius Bowles, entered a television store in Dorchester with the intent to rob the clerk. Shakoor was armed with a hunting knife (that he had received from Bowles) when they entered the store. Bowles demanded money, but the clerk, John Piotti, refused. A struggle ensued between Shakoor and Mr. Piotti, during which time Shakoor stabbed Mr. Piotti in the back three times. Prior to leaving the dying clerk, Shakoor stole \$45 from his wallet. John Piotti died shortly after being transported to the hospital.

Salah Shakoor has spent more than 33 years incarcerated on this life sentence. He has been paroled to the community twice with a total of 4 ½ years of community supervision.

II. PAROLE HISTORY

On March 19, 1990, Salah Shakoor was paroled to the Sargent House under intense supervision. He remained in the community for four months before being returned to custody for his alleged involvement in the use and sale of heroin. The Board affirmed revocation and denied parole.

In September 1999, Shakoor was re-paroled to the Salvation Army program under intense supervision, where he resided for approximately 60 days before being terminated for possession of a staff member's sneakers. Shakoor remained in the community without further incident until December 2003, when he was arrested for shoplifting, larceny less, and assault and battery. Shakoor had attempted to steal groceries from Shaw's Supermarket in Shrewsbury and then assaulted a security guard who tried to stop him. As a result of this arrest, Shakoor's parole was revoked and he has remained in custody.

III. PAROLE HEARING ON FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Salah Shakoor appeared, without the aid of legal representation, before the Parole Board for his third review hearing on February 19, 2015. He had been denied and given a five-year review date in 2010.¹ The Parole Board noted in the Record of Decision that "despite the parole officer's best efforts to assist Mr. Shakoor, he was unable or unwilling to abide by parole conditions. Currently, it appears that Mr. Shakoor is in need of in-depth counseling to address his criminal thinking and behavior."

In his opening remarks, Shakoor stated to the Board, "I am not violent. I don't do drugs anymore for over 20 years. I don't carry weapons. It's been a change all together." After his statements, several Board Members inquired about his prior parole violations and expressed concerns about his two returns to custody. Shakoor acknowledged his violations. When questioned about his actions that resulted in his arrest for assault and battery while on parole, Shakoor stated, "No one puts their hands on me, the store employee tapped me on the shoulder and I hit him." Shakoor also denied the attempt to steal groceries. Further, he minimized his assault and battery on the store's security guard as simply an instinctive reaction to someone tapping him on the shoulder. Despite what appears to be continued adjustment issues while in the community, Shakoor described his conduct as follows: "I did alright; I did good; I moved in with my ex-wife; I was a motivational speaker for kids... all that good stuff."

Shakoor's adjustment issues have continued while in custody and his institutional adjustment is marred with disciplinary reports. He has accrued 17 disciplinary reports since his last hearing in 2010 and a total of 36 since his return to custody in 2005. This has resulted in three placements in the Special Management Unit (SMU). Most concerning to the Board is the nature of his offenses: unauthorized sexual acts on inmates, masturbating in front of staff, lifting his shirt and lowering his pants while smiling at a Correctional Officer, and refusing direct orders. Shakoor admitted to the Board that "I might get argumentative with CO's." In March

¹ Shakoor received a five-year review date after his review hearing in 2005.

2013, Shakoor was transferred to a maximum security facility after participating in the sale of syringes stolen from HSU. The Board acknowledges his recent transfer from the maximum security facility to MCI-Norfolk.

At MCI-Norfolk, Shakoor is currently unemployed and reports participating in the Criminal Thinking program. He refuses to participate in AA/NA and explained to the Board, "I don't like the program; they only want to talk about drugs." Since his last hearing, Shakoor has completed the following programs: Correctional Recovery Academy, Smart Recovery, Alternatives to Violence (Basic), Alternatives to Violence (Advanced Course), and Substance Abuse Education. He advised the Board that his programming assisted in his rehabilitation and noted, "I got a chance to see myself, see where I have to correct myself." Board Members expressed concerns about the extent of his rehabilitation, given both his institutional behavior and his insistence that his compliance issues mainly stem from staff administering "too much insulin."

No one testified in support of parole. Shakoor informed the Board that he has two sisters, but they do not reside "in the area." He requested parole to a long term residential program without a step down in security level, but was unsure how he would support himself in the community. When questioned about employment, he replied, "I don't know anything man." When asked why he should be given another opportunity on parole, Shakoor stated, "I know for a fact I deserve another chance because I know me better, I know I ain't gonna take no risk."

IV. DECISION

Salah Shakoor's institutional adjustment remains a concern for this Board. Although he has completed programming to address substance abuse and violence reduction, Shakoor's continued accumulation of troubling disciplinary reports coupled with his lack of participation in AA/NA meetings is problematic. He needs more rehabilitation in order to reduce his risk of violence and to establish a well-engrained pattern of pro-social thinking and conduct. He also needs a longer period of positive institutional adjustment. Additionally, Shakoor should present a viable parole plan that includes both community support and potential employment opportunities.

The standard we apply in assessing candidates for parole is set out in 120 C.M.R. 300.04, which provides that "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." Applying that appropriately high standard here, it is the unanimous opinion of the Board that Salah Shakoor does not merit parole at this time because he is not rehabilitated.

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.


Janis DiLoreto Smith, Executive Director

4/15/15
Date