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Executive Director

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

SALAHUDDIN ALI

W66932

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: September 25, 2014

DATE OF DECISION: December 12, 2014

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Ina Howard-Hogan, Tina Hurley, Josh Wall

DECISION OF 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 in five years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On September 25, 1993, Salahuddin Ali and two co-defendants¹ robbed a bank in Cotuit, Massachusetts, while armed and masked. At approximately 10:30 am, a dirt bike bearing two riders approached the Plymouth Savings Bank. The driver, Anthony Rose, was dressed in black and wore a full-faced red motorcycle helmet. The passenger, Ali (also dressed in black), dismounted, rolled down a black ski mask, pulled out what appeared to be a gun, and entered the bank. Rose circled the dirt bike behind the bank. Inside the bank, Ali (who was then 35 years old) brandished the "gun,"² ordered everyone to the floor, vaulted the counter, and told the bank's manager to empty the cash drawers into a bag.³ He then ordered the manager to

¹ Ali's two co-defendants were Myles Miranda and Anthony Rose, both of whom were also convicted of armed robbery while masked. Miranda received a life sentence with the possibility of parole. The Board denied a parole to Miranda following an April 8, 2014 hearing. Rose was sentenced to serve 12 to 18 years and has been released.

² Although the gun was actually a lighter, witnesses described it as a black and silver colored automatic weapon.

the floor and went into her office, where he broke a window. Ali then tossed the bag full of money through the broken window in order to avoid a dye-detection device that may have been operating at the front door. He left the bank through the front door, recovered the bag of money, and escaped on the dirt bike with Rose. The thieves got away with approximately \$5,900. They later met with their third accomplice, Myles Miranda, who helped orchestrate the bank robbery, and split their proceeds.

On October 19, 1993, Ali was arrested in Mashpee for motor vehicle violations.⁴ On August 17, 1994, a Barnstable Superior Court jury found Ali guilty of armed robbery while masked.⁵ The court sentenced him to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

II. CRIMINAL AND INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

Ali was 35 years old at the time of the bank robbery. His criminal record began in 1971 (at age 12) and includes juvenile delinquent findings for breaking and entering, various types of larcenies, and use without authority. He has also been convicted as a youthful offender for armed assault with intent to rob and for use without authority. Ali's adult criminal record includes convictions for escape, operating under the influence of liquor, and various other motor vehicle offenses.

Ali has also had three past commitments for armed robbery, as well as commitments for assault with a dangerous weapon and possession of a sawed off shotgun. In 1976, he was sentenced to 10 years for armed robbery. He received parole in 1977, but violated parole by committing another armed robbery approximately 10 months later. Ali was subsequently convicted of two counts of armed robbery and sentenced to a term of 9 to 20 years. While serving that sentence at the Boston Pre-Release Center, Ali escaped on November 19, 1982, and committed a third armed robbery. He was returned on March 9, 1983, following his arrest for this robbery.⁶ Ali was convicted of armed robbery and possession of a sawed off shotgun. He was sentenced to 5 to 20 years to run from and after the previous sentence.

Ali was granted a parole in December 1987. Within two months of his release, he was charged with operating to endanger. He continued his criminal behavior with arraignments for motor vehicle offenses, including operating under the influence of liquor.⁷ Parole was revoked in July 11, 1989.⁸ Following another grant of parole in May 1993, Ali committed his fourth armed robbery, for which he is now serving a life sentence. This life sentence was ordered to

³ In addition to the gun facsimile, Ali carried a knife in the bag.

⁴ These charges were guilty filed.

⁵ Persons convicted of armed robbery under G.L. c. 265, § 17 may be sentenced to life or a term of years.

⁶ An escape charge was filed.

⁷ These charges were guilty filed or resulted in default warrants that were later removed.

⁸ Following a July 26, 1989 arraignment in Barnstable District Court, Ali was convicted of operating after a suspended license, for which he received a 60-day commitment.

run from and after the 5 to 20 year sentence he received for the 1983 robbery and took effect on August 14, 1999, after Ali was discharged from the prior sentence.⁹

During his 15 years of incarceration on the life sentence, Ali incurred five relatively minor disciplinary reports, one of which was dismissed. He has completed some rehabilitative programs, including Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA), Toastmasters-Speech Craft, and Alternatives to Violence (Basic). He is involved in Project Wake Up and Adult Basic Education. He does not have his G.E.D.

III. PAROLE HEARING ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2014

On September 25, 2014, Ali appeared before the Board for an initial hearing on his sentence.¹⁰ Ali said he has been in prison for the past 21 years. He legally changed his name¹¹ in 1982 after he became a Muslim and joined the Nation of Islam. Ali said his mother brought him to Massachusetts from California in 1969, at age 11, and by that time he had already committed two armed robberies in California.

After moving to Massachusetts, Ali dropped out of school in the sixth grade. He was then sent to a reform school in Brookline, where he learned to become a pickpocket. During that time, Ali began using drugs, including marijuana, prescription pills and cocaine. He said he continued to use drugs while in the community and that he last used in 1998, when he sniffed heroin while serving the preceding sentence.

With respect to his convictions for armed robberies in Massachusetts, Ali said that he held up a store in Falmouth in 1975 by using a fake gun to force a man to open a safe and give him \$1,000. He received parole in 1977 and was on parole for about ten months before he robbed a pharmacy of \$2,000 by using a fake gun. He admitted that he had also robbed other places during this parole, including "a couple of drug stores."

Ali said that after a parole violation warrant was lodged and he was sentenced for the new armed robbery, he eventually got to lower custody at the Plymouth Forestry Camp and then to Boston Pre-Release. He said he was warned at Boston Pre-Release that he would be reclassified if he did not get a job, so he "got frustrated and escaped."

Ali said that after his escape, he and his brother robbed the Falmouth National Bank with a sawed off shotgun. After his conviction and commitment for that crime, Ali was paroled again. He said that he then violated parole (again) with motor vehicle offenses and for refusing to provide a urine sample. Ali also admits that he was consuming alcohol and using illicit drugs during this period. Regarding his most recent offense, Ali said he had planned to rob that particular bank in 1988. He said, "Things didn't look right then," so he had to go back to prison to hone his skills. Ali acknowledged that he "never got it right on parole" in the past because

⁹ Board policy and regulations in effect when Ali committed the 1993 robbery did not permit aggregation of his consecutive sentence to his life sentence.

¹⁰ The effective date of his life sentence was August 13, 1999, which yielded a parole eligibility date of August 12, 2014. Ali postponed his first hearing and requested the hearing be placed on the next available docket which resulted in the September 25 hearing.

¹¹ Ali was formerly known as Salvatore Vaughn.

he did not care to listen then. He said he had no real fear of jail, and "didn't give a damn about the law." He said, "I knew a life sentence was coming ahead of time."

With respect to his institutional adjustment, Ali said he is now working everyday within the institution doing janitorial work. He is also involved in Project Wake-Up, where he speaks to at-risk youth. He said he completed the Alternatives of Violence program and CRA programs. He said he does not have a G.E.D., nor has any interest in obtaining a G.E.D. or any other diploma. Ali was unclear as to his parole plans, other than wanting to continue working with at-risk youth. When asked how he prepared himself for parole, he simply replied, "I'm ready!" During his closing statement, however, he requested parole to a halfway house or a residential program.

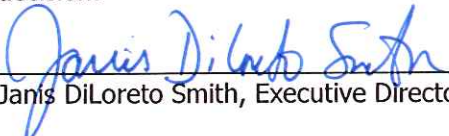
Ali's friend spoke in support of his release on parole. He said that he has known Salahuddin Ali for over 40 years, having served time with him in prison. This friend is working as the Criminal Justice Chairman of the Boston Workers Alliance (BWA) and said the BWA offers job training skills and has a temporary employment agency that helps people (like Salahuddin Ali) get a job. No one spoke in opposition to Ali's parole.


IV. DECISION

Salahuddin Ali has squandered several parole opportunities. After his first commitment for armed robbery in Massachusetts, Ali committed an armed robbery on each occasion when he received parole. He has had minimal programming to address his criminal behavior and has presented nothing to substantiate his assertion that he is ready to be paroled, other than his involvement in a program focused on reducing recidivism in at-risk youth and incurring only minimal disciplinary reports. While it is commendable that Ali is seeking to help at-risk youth, it is regrettable that he has not invested as much time and fervor in his own rehabilitation. Ali has a history of felonious property crimes, antisocial behavior, and substance abuse while in the community, and has not engaged in sufficient programming to address this behavior. In short, Salahuddin Ali has not demonstrated that he is rehabilitated.

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 Salahuddin Ali does not merit parole at this time. The period of review will be five years from the date of this hearing, during which time Ali should engage in rehabilitative programs that address issues of violence, antisocial behavior and criminal thinking.

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


Date