



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*



PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

**SEAN SMITH
W47602**

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: April 1, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: August 5, 2025

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley,¹ James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz²

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in 2 years from the date of the hearing.³

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On December 18, 1989, Essex Superior Court, Sean Smith was convicted of murder in the second-degree for the death of Joseph Baker. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On February 21, 1990, In Middlesex Superior Court, Mr. Smith pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the fact in the murder of Paul Kelley. He received a 6–7-year sentence ordered to run from and after his life conviction. Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2008,⁴ and after a review hearing in 2021.

On April 1, 2025, Sean Smith appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Robert Griffin. The Board’s decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Sean Smith’s April 1, 2025, hearing.

¹ Chair Hurley participated in the vote on this matter prior to her departure from the Board.

² Board Member Ortiz was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote

³ One Board Member voted to grant parole after completing 6 months in lower security.

⁴ Mr. Smith’s waived his initial parole hearing in 2003, and he postponed his review hearings in 2013 and 2018.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On November 2, 1988, Sean Smith and his co-defendant Elisabeth Hussey (FKA Edward Hussey)⁵ entered Paul Kelley's apartment with the intent to commit a robbery. The two individuals then forced Mr. Kelley into a vehicle, where Ms. Hussey strangled him to death. On November 13, 1988, Mr. Smith and Ms. Hussey were implicated in Mr. Kelley's murder as a result of Joseph Baker's cooperation with police. When Mr. Smith and Ms. Hussey were released from police custody, they strangled Mr. Baker to death. Approximately one month later, Mr. Smith and Ms. Hussey were taken into custody on unrelated crimes. Both individuals admitted to their involvement in the murders.

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 inmate'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 inmate'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 inmate at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the inmate'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: Mr. Smith is 59-years-old and has been incarcerated for the past 36 years. He was last before the Board in 2021, when parole was denied with a 4-year setback. Since that time, Mr. Smith has engaged in significant programming and has remained disciplinary report free. However, the Board agrees with the District Attorney's concerns regarding Mr. Smith's minimization of the underlying crimes, which involved the murder of 2 different men over a 2-week period, as well as his lack of empathy for the victims. During the hearing, Mr. Smith described the motive for these crimes as "profit over people," and the Board notes that Mr. Smith demonstrated similar motivations while incarcerated by running an illegal gambling operation. Although the Board recognizes that Mr. Smith has begun to develop insight into his needs area, the Board would like to see additional work on accountability and empathy, in a program such as the Restorative Justice Program or Jericho Circle. The Board considered public testimony from one individual, who spoke in support of parole. The Board also considered testimony in opposition to parole from the victim's family and from Essex County ADA Zachary Grube. The Board concludes that Sean Smith has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

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 decision.



Tonomey A. Coleman, Acting Chair



Date

⁵ On December 19, 1989, Ms. Hussey was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole for the murder of Mr. Baker and Mr. Kelley.