



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**SHAWN COLLINS**

**W43222**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** September 7, 2017

**DATE OF DECISION:** May 7, 2018

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe

**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 a suitable candidate for parole.<sup>1</sup> Parole is granted to a long term residential treatment program (sober housing) with special conditions, after successful adjustment of 12 months in lower security.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On February 6, 1987, in Plymouth Superior Court, a jury convicted Shawn Collins of the second degree murder of his three-month-old son Terri. Mr. Collins was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On August 26, 1985, 21-year-old Shawn Collins was alone watching Terri, while his girlfriend (Terri's mother) was food shopping. Mr. Collins had been drinking and was upset that Terri would not stop crying. He inflicted multiple injuries, which included violently shaking him. After Terri became unresponsive, Mr. Collins called 911. When first responders arrived at the house, Mr. Collins told them that the baby had stopped breathing. Emergency personnel transported Terri to Brockton Hospital, but he was eventually taken to Boston Children's

<sup>1</sup> Four Board Members voted to reserve parole to sober housing after 1 year in lower security. Two Board Members voted to deny parole with a review scheduled in two years from the date of the hearing.

Hospital due to the severity of the injuries. He was pronounced dead on August 27, 1985. The autopsy report indicated that Terri had suffered numerous injuries, including a leg fracture, bruises on the forehead, bruises around the eyes, bruises on the left and right buttock, and bruises on the back. The ultimate cause of Terri's death was cerebral edema caused by massive head trauma.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON SEPTEMBER 7, 2017**

Mr. Collins, now 54-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on September 7, 2017. Mr. Collins was initially paroled in 2004 to a residential treatment program, but was returned to custody in 2006, following parole violations. He was denied parole after review hearings in 2006, 2011, and 2016. In his opening statement at this hearing, Mr. Collins spoke of his embarrassment and shame in squandering his prior parole opportunity. Board Members asked Mr. Collins about his time on parole. He stated that he did not take his freedom seriously. He now understands, however, that poor decision-making and failure to communicate with his parole officer led to his return to custody.

Mr. Collins discussed the events surrounding Terri's murder. He said that, at 21-years-old, he was self-destructing through his drinking and drug use. His relationship with his girlfriend was also stressed, as the two frequently argued. They were moving around a lot, struggling with finances and employment, and raising both a two-year-old daughter and an infant. Mr. Collins is currently incarcerated at North Central Correctional Institution, where he works as the equipment manager for the music bunker. He has successfully participated in the 16 week General Maintenance Program. Since his hearing in 2016, Mr. Collins has received the following certificates: OSHS vocational education; Four Stroke Engine Equipment and Training; and Small Engine Repair. He attends Big Book 12 Step and NA/AA meetings on a weekly basis.

Mr. Collins had three supporters in attendance at his hearing. The Board considered testimony from his ex-girlfriend (victim's mother) and his sister, both of whom expressed strong support for parole. Plymouth County Assistant District Attorney Stacy Gauthier spoke in opposition to parole.

## **III. DECISION**

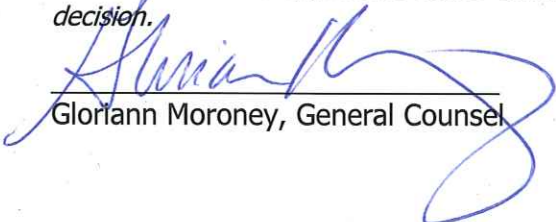
Shawn Collins has been re-incarcerated since 2006; re-incarceration has served its purpose. During the past 11 years, he has further invested in his rehabilitation and has maintained a positive deportment. He now understands the ramifications for his failure to abide by the conditions set forth by the Parole Board.

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. Collins' institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Collins' risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Collins' case, the Board is of the opinion that Shawn Collins is a suitable candidate for

parole. Parole is granted to sober housing with special conditions, after successful adjustment to 12 months in lower security.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Waive work for two weeks; Must be home between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am; GPS monitoring; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; Must have mental health and substance abuse counseling w/John Christian via MAP; Sober Housing residential program; AA/NA at least 3 times/week.

*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.*

  
Gloriann Moroney, General Counsel

5/7/18  
Date