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Tina M. Hurley
Chair

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

STEPHEN EMMONS
W60522

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **November 28, 2023**

DATE OF DECISION: **March 13, 2024**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse

VOTE: Parole denied with one year review.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On April 29, 1996, in Suffolk Superior Court, Stephen Emmons pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of his 33-year-old girlfriend, Nancy Wilson. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Parole was denied after an initial hearing in 2010, and after review hearings in 2015 and 2020. On November 28, 2023, Mr. Emmons appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Northeastern University School of Law students Miranda Popkey and Marina Jerry, who were supervised by Attorney Patricia Garin.

The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Mr. Emmons' November 28, 2023 hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On April 21, 1995, at approximately 1:00 p.m., Stephen Emmons' brother called police to report a dead body at the residence he shared with his brother Stephen in Dorchester. He further informed the police that he believed the victim to be Nancy Wilson, Mr. Emmons' girlfriend. When they arrived, the police observed Ms. Wilson's body inside a 1960 Mercury Comet in the garage. She was lying in a supine position across the front seat with her head adjacent to the steering wheel. Police observed head trauma to her forehead and the presence of blood in, and around, the motor vehicle. A blanket covered her body from the neck down. According to the medical examiner, the cause of death was severe

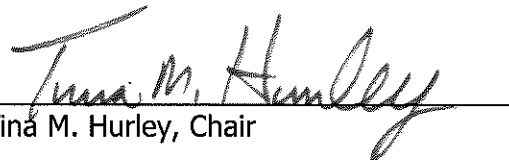
head trauma or bruising of the brain. Ms. Wilson also sustained broken ribs. A preliminary discovery revealed possible human bite marks on her upper arms.

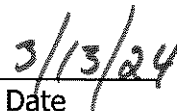
Further investigation revealed that Mr. Emmons, age 37, had been banished from the family home by both his mother and brother and was known to have been staying in the garage with Ms. Wilson. It was also determined during the investigation that the couple's relationship was abusive. Mr. Emmons' brother informed police that Mr. Emmons told his six-year-old daughter, and Ms. Wilson's sister, that he killed Ms. Wilson. Ms. Wilson's body was not discovered until almost a full week after the murder.

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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the incarcerated individual'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: This was Mr. Emmons' fourth appearance before the Board. Mr. Emmons has been incarcerated for 28 years. The Board has continued to recommend Mr. Emmons engage in Domestic Violence treatment and Victim Impact. Since the last hearing, Mr. Emmons has completed Victim Impact and the Restorative Justice Retreat. Mr. Emmons was on the waitlist for programming specific to Domestic Violence. Mr. Emmons has been sober for 28 years and has advanced in his rehabilitative progress. Domestic Violence, however, is a significant need area. Mr. Emmons provided a release plan that includes Domestic Violence [treatment] in the community; however, the Board will assess whether subject is ready for community supervision after the completion of Family Violence programming. The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Emmons will be able to complete such programming within a year. Mr. Emmons also stated he was pursuing ACCI Domestic Violence programming that will be beneficial.

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.


Tina M. Hurley, Chair


Date