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Tina M. Hurley
Chair

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Executive Director

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

STEPHEN EMMONS
W60522

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: November 26, 2024

DATE OF DECISION: March 17, 2025

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

VOTE: Parole is granted on/after 90 days in lower security to CRJ.

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, 2020, and 2023. On November 26, 2024, Mr. Emmons appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Northeastern University School of Law students Audrey Hu and Esther Liebell-McLean under the supervision of Attorney Patricia Garin. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Mr. Emmons' November 26, 2024, 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 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.

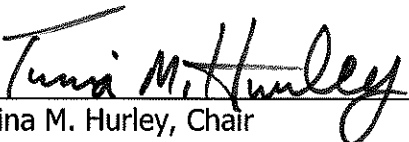
Further investigation revealed that Mr. Emmons, age 37, had been banished from the family home by both his mother and brother and was known to have been staying in the garage with Ms. Wilson. It was also determined during the investigation that the couple's relationship was abusive. Mr. Emmons' brother 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.

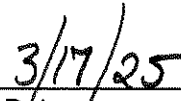
APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain 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 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: This was Mr. Emmons' 5th appearance before the Board. Mr. Emmons has been incarcerated for 29 years. He is 65-years-old. Mr. Emmons has invested in specific treatment to address Domestic Violence since the last hearing. He appears to have benefitted and increased his level of insight into the harm he has caused through his investment in Victim Impact, Restorative Justice, and Family Violence Education Group. Mr. Emmons is 29 years sober. He is the treasurer for Narcotics Anonymous and the Chairman of Stitch for Life Program. Mr. Emmons is also a mentor in the Culinary Arts Program and has acquired Occupational Skills to assist him with employment. Mr. Emmons has a support system and re-entry plan to meet his needs. The Board considered the public testimony in rendering its decision. Family members spoke in support of parole. Suffolk County ADA Montez Haywood was present at the hearing, but did not offer testimony. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Stephen Emmons has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make [his/her] release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: CRJ for at least 90 days; Waive work for 2 weeks; Curfew must be home between 10 PM and 6 AM; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; 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; No contact with victim(s)' family; Batterer's counseling; Must have mental health counseling for adjustment, Domestic Relationships; AA or/ NA at least 3 times per 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.


Tina M. Hurley, Chair


Date