



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

12 Mercer Road  
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Thomas A. Turco III  
Secretary

Telephone # (508) 650-4500  
Facsimile # (508) 650-4599

Gloriann Moroney  
Chair

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**STEVEN WOODWORTH**

**W52204**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** May 17, 2018

**DATE OF DECISION:** September 3, 2019

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

**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 by unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole. Parole is denied with a review scheduled in three years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On March 19, 1992, in Bristol Superior Court, Steven Woodworth pleaded guilty to the second degree murder of Julie Harlow and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On March 21, 1991, Steven Woodworth (age 26) murdered his 22-year-old girlfriend, Julie Harlow, by shooting her multiple times. Earlier in the day, Ms. Harlow had informed Mr. Woodworth that she was ending their relationship. Unwilling to accept the end of the relationship, Mr. Woodworth convinced Ms. Harlow to drive with him in his truck to discuss matters. After he picked her up at around 9 p.m. in Whitman, they drove around discussing their relationship. Mr. Woodworth could not convince Ms. Harlow to change her mind about ending their relationship so, as they were seated in the cab of his truck, he shot her numerous times using a .22 caliber pistol.

After shooting Ms. Harlow, Mr. Woodworth drove around southeastern Massachusetts for hours with her body still next to him in the truck. He ended up at his parents' house in Easton around 5:30 a.m., where he parked his truck in the driveway. He drank paint thinner, and shot himself once in the chest, in an attempt to take his own life. When Mr. Woodworth's father heard the gunshot, he came outside to investigate. Upon seeing his son and the victim in the truck, he called the police. Ms. Harlow was pronounced dead at the scene. Mr. Woodworth was taken to a nearby hospital, where he recovered from his injuries.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON MAY 17, 2018**

Steven Woodworth, now 53-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on May 17, 2018. Mr. Woodworth was not represented by counsel. Parole was denied after his initial hearing in 2006, and after his review hearings in 2011 and 2015. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Woodworth offered his "deepest most sincere remorse" to the family of Ms. Harlow. He acknowledged that his crime was one of domestic violence and that Ms. Harlow was "so much more than a victim." When asked to describe the governing offense, Mr. Woodworth explained that he had picked up Ms. Harlow in his car to discuss the end of their romantic relationship. He drove behind an abandoned building, where an argument ensued. When Ms. Harlow insisted on going home, Mr. Woodworth told the Board that he shot her eight times. The Board noted its concern with the premeditation and lethality of the murder and questioned Mr. Woodworth as to why he drove around with Ms. Harlow's body for hours after he shot her. Mr. Woodworth explained that he used that time to think of how he could make the incident "look better" or how he could "get out of it." Ultimately, he decided to drive to his parents' home in an attempt to take his own life.

The Board questioned Mr. Woodworth as to how he has changed since the murder of Ms. Harlow. Mr. Woodworth stated that at the time he killed Ms. Harlow, he was depressed and had blamed her for his problems. Now, through programming (namely, Characteristics of a Batterer) and rehabilitative efforts, he recognizes that his mindset was indicative of that of a batterer. Although Mr. Woodworth denied being abusive in relationships with women other than Ms. Harlow, he admitted to being "clingy" and "possessive" at times. Mr. Woodworth said that he has worked to understand and improve his issues with anger, hypersensitivity, and self-awareness. He credited his job as a companion in the prison hospital with rebuilding his social skills, as he cares for others who are incapable of caring for themselves. The Board noted that Mr. Woodworth has availed himself of a number of programs, including the Correctional Recovery Academy and Graduate Maintenance Program, but raised concerns that he has a pattern of exhibiting manipulative behavior, both before and during his incarceration. When asked if his transfer to a different institution was the result of this kind of behavior, Mr. Woodworth denied that it was. If released, Mr. Woodworth seeks parole to a long-term program to assist with reentry.

Mr. Woodworth's sister, brother-in-law, nephew, and cousin all testified in support of parole. Ms. Harlow's mother, brother, and two nieces testified in opposition to parole. Bristol County Assistant District Attorney Jason Mohan testified in opposition to parole.

### III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Steven Woodworth has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Although he has made strides in his rehabilitation, Mr. Woodworth's lack of candor remains a concern. Mr. Woodworth should continue to engage in programming to address his causative factors.

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 an 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. Woodworth's 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. Woodworth's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Woodworth's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Steven Woodworth is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Woodworth's next appearance before the Board will take place in three years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Woodworth to continue working towards his full rehabilitation.

*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.*

  
Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

9/3/2019  
Date