



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

THOMAS KING  
W34620

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** October 22, 2020

**DATE OF DECISION:** October 7, 2021

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa<sup>1</sup>

**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 not a suitable candidate for parole.<sup>2</sup> Parole is denied with a review in two years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On June 7, 1974, after a jury trial in Suffolk Superior Court, Thomas King was convicted of armed robbery, rape, and breaking and entering with intent to commit a felony in the attack of a 32-year-old female.<sup>3</sup> He was sentenced to three concurrent sentences of life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was convicted of assault by means of a dangerous weapon and unnatural acts, for which he received consecutive sentences of 9 to 10 years and 3 to 5 years in state prison, respectively.

On November 23, 1973, 18-year-old Thomas King, along with his two co-defendants, forced their way into a woman's apartment in Boston. They tied her up, robbed her, physically assaulted her, and then raped her multiple times at gun point and knife point. On December

<sup>1</sup> Chair Moroney recused.

<sup>2</sup> Two Board Members voted to grant parole to a long-term residential program.

<sup>3</sup> Co-defendants Steven Nicholson and Gary Mitchell were also given second-degree life sentences for rape, armed robbery, and armed assault.

12, 1973, shortly after the attack and robbery of the first victim, Mr. King broke into another woman's apartment and robbed her at gunpoint. On February 18, 1975, in Suffolk Superior Court, he was sentenced for the second offense, receiving 12 to 20 years for armed robbery, 9 to 10 years for breaking and entering in the daytime with intent to commit felony, and 2.5 to 5 years for assault by means of dangerous weapon. The 1975 sentences were to run consecutive to one another, but concurrent with his 1974 consecutive sentences.

In late 1973, at the time of these offenses, Mr. King was on parole from an armed robbery. His arrest for the rape and robberies resulted in his parole being revoked in February 1974. The parole violation was lodged behind his conviction for the life sentences, remaining until withdrawn by a Parole Board vote in 1990.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON OCTOBER 22, 2020**

Thomas King, now 66-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on October 22, 2020, for a review hearing. He was represented by law students from Northeastern University School of Law. Mr. King was denied parole after his initial hearing in 1990. This is his seventh appearance before the Board. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. King apologized to the victim for his "vicious" crime and acknowledged the "immeasurable harm" he caused the victim's family, as well as the community. Mr. King told the Board that he often reflects on the pain he inflicted, hoping that his rehabilitative efforts will "atone" for his actions. Law Student Shannon Mathew outlined Mr. King's institutional progress, noting his participation in the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) and his commitment to sobriety. In addition, his vocational skills were noted.

Mr. King explained that, on the day of the governing offense, he and his codefendants had initially planned on robbing the victim. He admitted, however, that after they entered the apartment, he decided to rape the victim. When Board Members inquired as to whether he has been able to fully appreciate the impact his crime had on the victim, Mr. King explained that participation in SOTP has enabled him to "put himself in her shoes." When asked when he first took full responsibility for the governing offense, Mr. King stated that it was 2001. When Board Members expressed their concern as to why it took so long, Mr. King indicated that he wanted to "act" innocent.

Board Members questioned Mr. King as to whether he committed additional crimes of this nature (aside from what he was charged with). He initially said no, despite participating in an armed robbery that took place approximately one month after the governing offense. In addition to the robbery, he was also suspected of raping his robbery victim. Upon questioning, Mr. King stated that he "came upon a conversation," where his codefendants discussed burglarizing a female that lived nearby. When the Board noted the similarities between the governing offense and this crime, Mr. King maintained that his motive to participate in the robbery was purely financial; he needed money to obtain drugs. When asked if he raped the victim, Mr. King asserted his innocence and told the Board that he did not "see anyone rape her." When asked about his codefendants for this crime, he indicated that he did not wish to disclose further details. While Board Members acknowledged that Mr. King was found not guilty of rape for this crime, they conveyed their concern as to his lack of candor regarding the commission of this offense, as well as his involvement.

When Board Members questioned Mr. King as to the causative factors of his sexual offense, he cited the abuse he suffered as a child; in particular, the abuse his mother and aunt inflicted upon him, coupled with being teased by girls in school. Harboring a negative perception of women, Mr. King "carried" his pain with him throughout his life, never dealing with it until treatment. In discussing his rehabilitative efforts, Mr. King indicated that completing SOTP was an important factor in his rehabilitation. Since he had not completed the program previously, he indicated he now understands why he wasn't ready to be paroled. When Board Members questioned him as how he currently addresses anger, Mr. King said that the tools he has acquired are "imbedded" in him. He now "walks away" from confrontation and teaches his fellow inmates to do the same. Board Members, however, noted Mr. King's 2016 disciplinary report where he threatened to assault another inmate, occurring shortly after his most recent parole decision. Board Members struggled to reconcile the fact that Mr. King reverted to criminal thinking when he was unable to control his anger and disappointment over the denial of parole.

The Board also raised concern as to Mr. King's manipulative tendencies while incarcerated, as exhibited through his disciplinary history. He admitted to manipulating other inmates out of fear, explaining that he "developed and sustained a reputation" to stay safe. Although Mr. King acknowledged that his behavior was wrong, Board Members noted that his explanation was indicative of minimization. Mr. King explained that he is different now, as he realized that he had to stop "victimizing people." Mr. King shared with the Board that he's been sober for 25 years and credits his sobriety to consistent participation in Narcotics Anonymous (NA). Currently, Mr. King is the chairman of the program at his facility.

Mr. King's wife, several of his friends, and retired Judge Leslie Harris testified in support of parole. The Board also considered a letter in opposition to parole from Boston Police Commissioner William Gross.

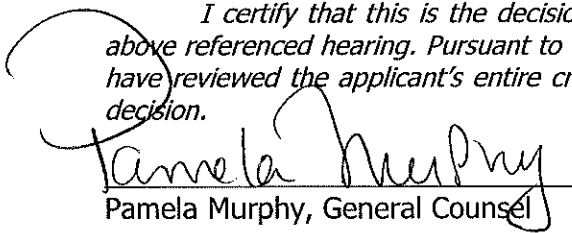
### **III. DECISION**

Although progress has been made, the Board is of the opinion that Thomas King has not yet demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. King has served approximately 47 years for the physical and sexual assault at gunpoint and knifepoint with two co-defendants. Mr. King successfully completed the Sex Offender Treatment Program in 2017 and has continued to participate in the Maintenance Program. He has been sober for approximately 25 years. The Board encourages him to maintain a positive adjustment and continue to further address his targeted areas to include hostility and anger.

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. King's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board has also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. King's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. King's case, the Board is of the opinion that Thomas King is not rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. King's next appearance before the Board will take place in two years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. King to continue working toward 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

10/7/2021  
Date