

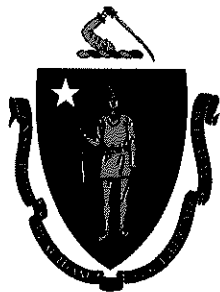
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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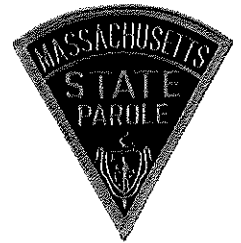
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Lieutenant Governor

Terrence M. Reidy
Secretary



Tina M. Hurley
Chair

Lian Hogan
Executive Director

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

VERONICA JEFFERSON
F80494

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **May 21, 2024**

DATE OF DECISION: **August 19, 2024**

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 to a Long-Term Residential Treatment Program that can meet her needs, but not before 90 days in lower security.¹

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On December 8, 2005, in Suffolk Superior Court, Veronica Jefferson pleaded guilty to murder in the second degree and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, Ms. Jefferson also pleaded guilty to six counts of larceny over \$250 and was sentenced to 2 to 4 years in state prison, which were ordered to be served concurrently with her life sentence for murder.

Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2022.² On May 21, 2024, Veronica Jefferson appeared before the Board for a review hearing. She was represented by Attorney Deirdre Thurber. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Veronica Jefferson's May 21, 2024 hearing.

¹ One Board Member voted to deny parole with a review two years from the hearing date; another Board Member voted to deny parole with a review one year from the hearing date.

² Ms. Jefferson elected to postpone the hearings that were scheduled prior to 2022.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On April 5, 2002, Veronica Jefferson, 35, fatally beat and stabbed Robert Carlson (age 68) in his Roxbury apartment. During the assault, Mr. Carlson called 911 and could be heard saying, "She's killing me," while someone else shouted. When police responded to the multi-unit residence, they found Ms. Jefferson bleeding profusely from a wound to her finger, which she claimed was the result of a kitchen accident. Once Ms. Jefferson refused medical treatment, police left the scene unaware of what had actually occurred. After killing Mr. Carlson, Ms. Jefferson used several checks to withdraw money from his checking account. Then, on April 11, 2002, she called 911 and reported that her landlord had been murdered. When homicide detectives questioned Ms. Jefferson, she claimed that on April 5, 2002, she had gone into Mr. Carlson's home for an innocuous purpose, and he mistook her for an intruder and cut her finger with a knife. She then "lost it" and beat Mr. Carlson with a pipe and possibly stabbed him. Then, when police responded to the scene, she lied to them.

Police searched Mr. Carlson's apartment and found his body in a hallway. Contrary to Ms. Jefferson's claims, the blood left at the scene suggested that the attack had begun while Mr. Carlson was in bed.

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 Ms. Jefferson's second appearance before the Board. She has served 28 years of a life sentence. The Board considered Ms. Jefferson's cognitive/developmental limitations, major mental health issues, and substance use as being directly related to the offense and her institutional adjustment. The Board also considered the forensic evaluation and testimony from Dr. Herzog and proposed release plan from Lauren Honigman LICSW in rendering its decision. The Board also notes that Ms. Jefferson's most recent evaluation from Dr. Herzog indicates that she is at low risk of recidivism. The Board also considered the impact of continued incarceration on her mental health. Since the last hearing, she has had no incidents of violence. She presented with insight into her mental health issues and need for compliance with ongoing treatment. She presented a comprehensive release plan that will address her ongoing needs. The Board considered the testimony from members of the public, who spoke in support of, and in opposition to, Ms. Jefferson's parole release. Support included Dr. Herzog and Lauren Honigman LICSW. Opposition included four members of the victim's family and Suffolk County ADA Montez Haywood.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Long-Term Residential Treatment Program; Waive work for program; Curfew - must be at home between 10PM and 6AM at parole officer's discretion; Electronic monitoring at parole officer's discretion; Must take prescribed medication if prescribed; 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; Must have substance abuse evaluation and must comply with recommended treatment plan; Weekly counseling for complex PTSD; Must sign all release of information documents - treatment providers.

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