

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

WENDELL GREENMAN
W31946

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

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

DATE OF DECISION: **August 20, 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 denied with a review in 3 years from the date of the hearing.¹

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On November 9, 1968, in Franklin Superior Court, Wendell Greenman pleaded guilty to murder in the second degree for the death of 10-year-old Anna Marie Townsend. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 1982, and after 12 subsequent review hearings. On May 21, 2024, Mr. Greenman appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Christine Sunnerberg. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Wendell Greenman's May 21, 2024, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On November 7, 1966, Anna Marie Townsend was reported missing by her mother when she failed to return from a local store, where she was sent to purchase milk. The next day, her body was found in a nearby sandpit with her dress above her waist and her undergarments removed. Anna Marie Townsend had been repeatedly stabbed with a sharp object, including once in the back and several times in the rectal area. Subsequent autopsy and lab reports found sperm cells present in both rectal and vaginal smears.

¹ Two Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in four years; two Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in two years.

Investigators led police to Wendell Greenman (age 23). He drove a vehicle that had tires consistent with the tracks found at the scene of the body. In addition, he had been acting strangely in the store where the victim was last seen. On May 15, 1967, after extensive investigation, Wendell Greenman was arrested for murder of Anna Marie Townsend.

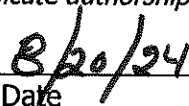
APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole “[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain 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. Greenman’s 14th appearance before the Board. Mr. Greenman denied raping the victim for 50 years. He admits that he lied to previous evaluators and his family. Mr. Greenman stated that he first came to terms with the sexual nature of his offense after entering the Sex Offender Treatment Program (“SOTP”) in 2015. Mr. Greenman has since completed the SOTP and is engaged in maintenance one time per month. Mr. Greenman openly discussed the traumatic experiences he endured, and the insights he has gained, as to the causative factors for committing this offense. The Board considered the expert testimony of Dr. Leonard Bard, as well as his submitted report. Mr. Greenman discussed his progress in his capacity for empathy and progress in identifying his triggers and the skills he has internalized that will prevent him from re-offending. The Board commends Mr. Greenman’s investment in treatment; however, the Board is concerned that he has not had a sufficient period of maintenance in light of the severity of the offense. The Board also considered the strong opposition from the victim’s family and concerned citizens. Dr. Leonard Bard provided testimony in support of parole, and a social worker provided a re-entry plan, should Mr. Greenman be paroled. Three members of the community and an Assistant District Attorney from the Northwestern District Attorney’s Office spoke in opposition to parole. The Board concludes that Mr. Greenman has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

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