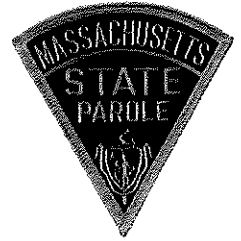


*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*

**PAROLE BOARD**

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*Natick, Massachusetts 01760*



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**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**WILLIAM DUCLOS**  
**W48807**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** **Review Hearing**

**DATE OF HEARING:** **May 14, 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 four years from the date of the hearing.<sup>1</sup>

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY:** On July 26, 1990, William Duclos pleaded guilty to two counts of murder in the second degree for the deaths of his parents Emile Duclos and Anna Duclos. He was sentenced to two concurrent terms of life in prison with the possibility of parole. On June 22, 1994, Mr. Duclos was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder and received a consecutive sentence of one year to one year and one day. Parole was denied following Mr. Duclos' initial hearing in 2004, and after review hearings in 2009, 2014, and 2019. On May 14, 2024, Mr. Duclos appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was not represented by counsel. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Mr. Duclos' May 14, 2024 hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** William Duclos lived with his parents in Winchendon and started a business on the family property. He frequently employed his co-defendant John Smith to do carpentry work and various odd jobs. Both Mr. Duclos and Mr. Smith were on bad terms with Mr. Duclos' mother Anna. Several weeks before the murder, a dispute arose between Mr. Duclos and his mother regarding the proceeds of an insurance policy. Relations between them consequently worsened. On the morning of May 22, 1989, Mr. Duclos (age 19) and Mr. Smith (age 18) agreed on a plan to kill Mr. Duclos' parents and make it look like a robbery. Later that

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<sup>1</sup> One Board Member voted to deny parole with a two-year review; one Board Member voted to deny parole with a three-year review; one Board Member voted to deny parole with a five-year review.

night, Mr. Duclos and Mr. Smith used two rifles from the family gun cabinet and shot both Anna (age 51) and Emile Duclos (age 52) in their bedroom. Both parents died from multiple gunshot wounds. After, Mr. Duclos conspired with Mr. Smith to dispose of the rifles at a local pond and fabricate an alibi. After failing to convince the police of his story, Mr. Duclos confessed to the crime. He later agreed to plead guilty to second degree murder and to testify against Mr. Smith in Mr. Smith's first degree murder trial.

Between April and May 1992, while incarcerated at MCI-Norfolk, Mr. Duclos solicited an undercover state trooper to murder Mr. Smith and make it appear as a suicide. As part of the conspiracy to murder scheme, Mr. Duclos had created three suicide notes in Mr. Smith's name. In one note, addressed to Mr. Smith's mother, Mr. Duclos had Mr. Smith admit to being solely responsible for the murders due to a sexual assault by Mr. Emile Duclos. In another note, addressed to Mr. Duclos, Mr. Duclos had Mr. Smith apologize for "spiking" Mr. Duclos' beer with an undisclosed substance prior to the murder and claiming he could not live with what Emile Duclos had done to him. In the third note, addressed to "To Whom It May Concern," Mr. Duclos had Mr. Smith proclaim that he (Mr. Smith) killed Mr. Duclos' parents because Emile Duclos had sexually assaulted him in a barn. That note also claimed Mr. Duclos did not know what happened, as he (Mr. Smith) had put something in Mr. Duclos' drink.

**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).

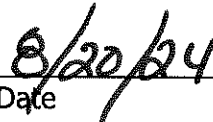
**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** This was Mr. Duclos' fifth appearance before the Board. The Board continues to question his credibility with regards to his role in the offenses. The Board is also concerned with his actions while incarcerated that included an attempt to have his co-defendant murdered in prison. This was a well thought out plan, and he even went to the extent of writing a suicide note with self-serving statements in an effort to alleviate him from responsibility for the offenses. His other motivation for having his co-defendant murdered was because his co-defendant was not supporting his false claim that he was sexually abused by his mother. The extent to which he went to perpetuate these false claims included composing a detailed, lengthy account of the abuse in hopes to gain sympathy and support for his release. The Board does note that Mr. Duclos has continued to pursue programming and appears to have benefitted from the Companion Program. The Board is recommending that he continue with Restorative Justice programming, pursue Victim Impact, and gain a greater appreciation and understanding of how his self-serving behavior has continued to cause harm to others.

The Board considered public testimony from Mr. Duclos' friend, who spoke in support of parole. The Board also considered testimony from the District Attorney's Office, who strongly opposed

his release, and testimony from Mr. Duclos' brother, who detailed the financial and personal harm that he has suffered due to Mr. Duclos' recent and unsuccessful pursuit to sue him over a family estate. Mr. Duclos' brother also received a letter from Mr. Duclos in 2022, where he sought to persuade his brother into testifying in support of his parole. The Board concludes that Mr. Duclos 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