



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

WILLIAM HICKS
W86107

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **July 27, 2023**

DATE OF DECISION: **November 8, 2023**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Tina M. Hurley, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, James Kelcourse

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On December 27, 1984, following a jury trial in Plymouth Superior Court, William Hicks was found guilty of second-degree murder for the shooting death of Robert Wesley. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On September 3, 1983, 23-year-old William Hicks shot and killed 26-year-old Robert Wesley.¹ Prior to the governing offense, Ricardo Rogers, Mr. Hicks' stepbrother, asked him to help with a move from Connecticut to Brockton, Massachusetts. While preparing for the move, Mr. Rogers and his brother-in-law, Mr. Wesley, got into an argument. Both Mr. Rogers and Mr. Wesley made threatening statements to one another, suggesting a possibility of violence upon arrival at the Brockton apartment. Before leaving Connecticut, Mr. Hicks stopped at his father's house and retrieved a rifle, which he placed in the trunk of his car. When they arrived in Brockton, Mr. Wesley came to the apartment and an argument ensued between him and Mr. Rogers. At the time, Mr. Hicks was on the sidewalk in front of the apartment. He was armed, yelling, "Just give me the word." In response, Mr. Wesley, who was unarmed, approached Mr. Hicks. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Hicks (who was standing a couple feet away) shot and killed Mr. Wesley. Mr. Hicks was arrested several days later in Connecticut. Mr. Hicks shot and killed a second victim the day after murdering Mr. Wesley, while on the run.²

¹ Mr. Hicks was on parole for first degree kidnapping at the time of the governing offense.

² Mr. Hicks completed his Connecticut murder sentence in 2005.

PAROLE HEARING: William Hicks appeared before the Board for a review hearing on July 27, 2023. He was represented by two student attorneys from Northeastern University Law School under the supervision of Attorney Patricia Garin. Parole was denied after Mr. Hicks' initial hearing in 2020. The entire video recording of Mr. Hicks' July 27, 2023 hearing is fully incorporated by reference into the Board's decision.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: 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.

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 a suitable candidate for parole at this time. Parole is granted after 6 months in minimum [security] to CRJ Brooke House for at least 90 days.

In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Hicks' 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. Hicks' risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Hicks' case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Mr. Hicks is rehabilitated, and therefore merits parole at this time, subject to special conditions.

Mr. Hicks is 63-years-old and has been incarcerated for over 40 years. His institutional adjustment has been positive. Mr. Hicks provided the Board with insight into his offenses and has invested in rehabilitation to address his causative factors. Mr. Hicks engaged in therapeutic programs to address his significant trauma history. Mr. Hicks also completed Advanced Violence Prevention programming, and completed GED and occupational skill training. The Board notes significant medical issues. Prior to his medical issues, he maintained consistent employment. Mr. Hicks also established professional support to assist with re-entry needs. He presented as remorseful and motivated to succeed in the community. His immediate and long-term re-entry plans will meet his needs. The Board considered testimony in support of parole from Milton Jones, Director of the Peace Institute, who detailed services they will provide for Mr. Hicks. The Board also considered testimony in opposition to parole provided by two members of the victim's family and Assistant District Attorney Karen Palumbo from Plymouth County.

Special Conditions: Waive work for medical; Curfew - Must be at home between 10PM and 6AM or at Parole Officer's discretion; Electronic Monitoring at Parole Officer's discretion; Must take prescribed medication; 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 follow recommendations; Must have mental health counseling for PTSD/trauma, re-entry; Residential program - CRJ for at least 90 days.

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

11/08/2023

Date