



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

WILLIAM MURPHY

W84163

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: June 12, 2018

DATE OF DECISION: March 27, 2019

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa¹

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 by unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole. Parole is denied with a review scheduled in three years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On September 9, 2004, in Springfield Superior Court, William Murphy pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of Amy Levesque and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On July 23, 2003, in Springfield, 33-year-old William Murphy stabbed to death 29-year-old Amy Levesque, his ex-girlfriend and the mother of his children. Ms. Levesque and Mr. Murphy had been dating for approximately 14 years, and the couple had three children together. At some point prior to the murder, Ms. Levesque had broken up with Mr. Murphy. On the day of his arrest, Mr. Murphy told police that Ms. Levesque had attacked him with a knife, but somehow ended up

¹ Board Member Lucy Soto-Abbe recused due to conflict.

stabbing herself in the ensuing struggle. Once Mr. Murphy learned that Ms. Levesque had died, however, he told police that he stabbed her following an argument.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON JUNE 12, 2018

William Murphy, now 48-years old, appeared before the Parole Board for an initial hearing on June 12, 2018. Mr. Murphy was not represented by counsel. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Murphy expressed his remorse for killing Ms. Levesque and apologized to her family and friends. He also apologized for leaving his children without a mother. Mr. Murphy told the Board that he has addressed his alcoholism, which contributed to him killing Ms. Levesque.

The Board noted that friends and family of Ms. Levesque described the 14 year relationship of the couple as both verbally and physically abusive. The Board questioned Mr. Murphy about his relationship with the victim leading up to her murder. Mr. Murphy told the Board that they were both struggling with serious financial problems and substance abuse issues at the time of the murder. Mr. Murphy described how he got drunk each day, how he had lost his job and the apartment he shared with Ms. Levesque, and how he "blamed her for a lot I shouldn't have blamed her for." Mr. Murphy admitted that he was physically, verbally, and emotionally abusive to the victim. He stated that the abuse escalated, leading up to the murder, and acknowledged that he was a batterer. Mr. Murphy told the Board, however, that he has since learned to deal with his emotions and ask for help, and that physical violence, verbal abuse, and intimidation are unacceptable.

When the Board questioned Mr. Murphy about the murder, Mr. Murphy described how he had been drinking at a bar across the street from where Ms. Levesque was staying. When he learned that another man may have been staying at the house, he went into the house to confront him, but was chased out when the man threatened him with a baton. Mr. Murphy admitted that after this confrontation, he went back to the bar and armed himself with a steak knife. Later that day, Ms. Levesque came to the bar to tell Mr. Murphy that she was dating the man who had threatened him. Mr. Murphy said he was hurt, angry, jealous, and drunk. Outside the bar, he stabbed Ms. Levesque in the chest and then fled to a friend's house. Mr. Murphy remembered telling his friend to call the police to check on her. He admitted to the Board that he initially lied to police, telling them that Ms. Levesque had attacked him with the knife. When he learned that she had died, he confessed that he was the one with the knife.

The Board noted Mr. Murphy's positive institutional record. He has maintained his sobriety and employment, obtained his G.E.D., and participated in rehabilitative and vocational training programs. He has accrued only one disciplinary report in 15 years. When the Board asked him about his programming efforts, Mr. Murphy said that he attends Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous (weekly), and the Twelve Step Program. Mr. Murphy reported that Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA) was helpful in teaching him that having a structured life and identifying emotional triggers are important in maintaining sobriety. He also completed the Restorative Justice 8-week program. Mr. Murphy explained that talking to his children about the impact his crime had on them has been difficult, but beneficial. If released, Mr. Murphy asked that he eventually be able to live with his father and stated that he hoped to work in the food industry. He added that he would pursue whatever educational or vocational opportunities were available to him.

Mr. Murphy's family and friends attended in support of parole. Mr. Murphy's father, brother, and two children testified on his behalf. Mr. Murphy's family and friends also submitted letters in support of parole. Hampden County Assistant District Attorney Howard Safford testified in opposition to parole and submitted a letter of opposition, as well.

III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that William Murphy has not yet demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Murphy has served 15 years for stabbing to death his ex-girlfriend and the mother of his children. The Board believes that continued participation in programming to include the 32 week Restorative Justice programming would be beneficial to his rehabilitation.

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. Murphy'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. Murphy's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Murphy's case, the Board is of the opinion that William Murphy is not yet rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

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



Shara Benedetti, Acting General Counsel

3/27/19

Date