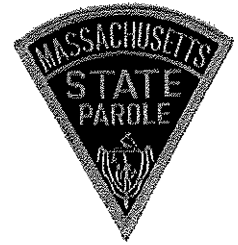


The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

WILLIAM SHIPPS
W40852

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: May 20, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: October 28, 2025

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:¹ Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz

VOTE: Parole is granted to an approved home plan on or after a total of 90 days in minimum security.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On October 27, 1984, after a jury trial in Norfolk County Superior Court, William Shipps was found guilty of two counts of first-degree murder, two counts of armed robbery, and two counts of armed assault in a dwelling. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the murder of Esther King, a consecutive life sentence without the possibility of parole for the murder of John Lucey, and four additional life sentences for the armed robbery and armed assault convictions, which were ordered to be served concurrently with the life sentence he received for the murder of Esther King. He became parole eligible following the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in *Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk District*, 466 Mass. 655 (2013).]. Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2021.³

On May 20, 2025, Mr. Shipps appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Amy Belger. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Shipps' May 20, 2025, hearing.

¹ Board Member Coughlin and Acting Chair Coleman were not present for the hearing, but both reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

² Two Board Members voted to deny parole with review in two years.

³ Mr. Shipps voluntarily postponed his hearing in 2014 and 2019.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On July 24, 1982, an elderly brother and sister were murdered in their home in Stoughton. John J. Lucey and Esther L. King were fatally shot during an armed robbery. Earlier in the day, 16-year-old William Shipps and another juvenile went into the garage of a residence near the Shipps' family home and stole some items. The juveniles then proceeded to break into two cars nearby. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Shipps and the juvenile went into the garage of the victims' residence. According to the juvenile, Mr. Shipps returned to the victims' residence and broke in. Later in the day, a family member found Mr. Lucey's body in his bedroom and Ms. King (lying face up) in her blood-stained bed. Mr. Lucey was pronounced dead at the scene. Ms. King was taken to a local hospital, where she died shortly thereafter.

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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the incarcerated individual's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board.

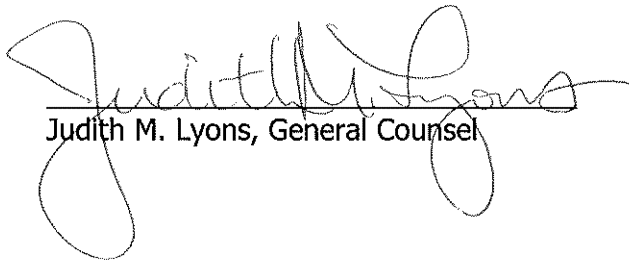
In the context of an incarcerated individual convicted of first or second-degree murder, who was a juvenile at the time the offense was committed, the Board takes into consideration the attributes of youth that distinguish juvenile homicide offenders from similarly situated adult offenders. Consideration of these factors ensures that the parole candidate, who was a juvenile at the time they committed murder, has a meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation. *Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk District*, 466 Mass. 655, 674 (2013). See also *Commonwealth v. Okoro*, 471 Mass. 51 (2015). The factors considered by the Board include a juvenile's "lack of maturity and an underdeveloped sense of responsibility, leading to recklessness, impulsivity, and heedless risk-taking; vulnerability to negative influences and outside pressures, including from their family and peers; limited control over their own environment; lack of the ability to extricate themselves from horrific, crime-producing settings; and unique capacity to change as they grow older." *Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk District*, 471 Mass. 12, 30 (2015). The Board also recognizes the incarcerated individual's right to be represented by counsel during their appearance before the Board. *Id.* at 20-24.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: This was Mr. Shipps second appearance before the Board. He was 16-years-old at the time of the offense. He is currently 59-years-old. Mr. Shipps has served over 42 years. He is currently in minimum security. Since the last hearing, he has continued program involvement and advanced his participation in Restorative Justice and the Youthful Coalition, which he started. His last disciplinary report was over 2 decades ago. Mr. Shipps has also invested in Vocational Training and has many transferable skills that will assist with re-entry. Mr. Shipps currently works as a clerk in the library. He has a strong support system and re-entry plan. The Board considered the expert testimony from Dr. Laurie Guidry, who opined that Mr. Shipps has been rehabilitated and is at a "low to non-cognizable risk for violent offense recidivism." In

rendering their decision, the Board considered testimony from Mr. Shipps' family and members of the community in support of parole. The Board heard testimony in opposition to parole from a family member of one of the victims, as well as Norfolk County Assistant District Attorney Michael McGee. The Board concludes that William Shipps has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Approve home plan before release; Waive work for 2 weeks; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; 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; No contact with witness(es); Must have Mental Health Counseling for adjustment; Program Requirements - Smart Recovery.

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.


Judith M. Lyons, General Counsel

10/28/25
Date