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*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
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**PAROLE BOARD**

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Charlene Bonner  
Chairperson

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**WILSON PASTEUR**

**W80893**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Initial Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** April 30, 2015

**DATE OF DECISION:** August 12, 2015

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Lee Gartenberg, Ina Howard-Hogan, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe.

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying 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 in three years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On October 18, 2002, in Essex Superior Court, Wilson Pasteur was found guilty of murder in the second degree as a joint venturer and of carrying a dangerous weapon without a license. On the second degree murder conviction, he received a life sentence with the possibility of parole after serving 15 years. He received a concurrent 4 to 5 year committed sentence for the weapons charge.<sup>1</sup> Pasteur was 19-years-old at the time of the murder.

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<sup>1</sup> There are two co-defendants in this case: Derek Wright (in a separate jury trial) was convicted of murder in the first degree on a theory of deliberate premeditation and was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Eric Miller (in exchange for his testimony for the Commonwealth) pleaded guilty to manslaughter.



Wilson Pasteur and Eric Miller were members of a local gang. Miller's friend, Derek Wright, belonged to another gang. On the evening of June 5, 2000, Miller met Pasteur at his apartment and informed him that Wright wanted to go on a "mission" in retaliation for injuries that Wright had sustained earlier that week in an attack by a third, rival gang. Wright apparently planned to make use of a .357 caliber handgun that he and Miller had stolen a few days before, in addition to a .44 caliber handgun that Wright had obtained from a fellow gang member. Pasteur took the .44 caliber handgun and claimed that Miller should not have it because he was a "hothead." Wright loaded the gun for Pasteur and told him to "just pull the trigger" in order to fire. Pasteur (who was wearing sweatpants) switched pants with Miller (who was wearing jeans), so that Pasteur could adequately conceal and carry the .44 caliber handgun in his waistband. With Pasteur and Wright armed, the three men went to Lowell Street and passed a group of rival gang members sitting in a white car. Wright said that he would count to 37 and then start walking back toward the white car. Pasteur and Miller were to circle the block and approach the rival gang members from the front of the car. Wright would fire at the rival gang members from the back of the car, while Pasteur fired on them from the front.

As they walked, Pasteur told Miller that he thought the plan was "stupid" because either they, or Wright, could get shot. Despite this, the two continued to circle the block. They reached Lowell Street, but did not see Wright where he had planned to be, so they continued past the rival gang member's car. After they walked past the car, several of the rival gang members got out of the car and began shouting insults at them. Pasteur and Miller began to walk faster, but the rival gang members followed them down the street. Pasteur and Miller both observed the rival gang members carrying items, including bricks and sticks, behind their backs or under their shirts. At this point, they saw Wright holding a gun and wearing a bandana over his face, squatting in the street in front of a white van. Pasteur passed Wright and the white van, then turned and faced the rival gang members. As Pasteur and the closest rival exchanged insults, Pasteur took out his gun, held it by his side, then raised and pointed the gun. The closest rival ran. Pasteur then fired a shot and the other rival gang members ran as well. Pasteur attempted to fire a second shot, but the gun would not work. After Pasteur fired, Wright "popped up" and fired four or five shots. One of Wright's shots struck the victim, Savorn Prom, in the face and killed him.

After the shooting, Miller, Wright, and Pasteur fled from Lowell Street on foot. Pasteur and Miller met back at Pasteur's apartment, where Pasteur unloaded the .44 caliber handgun and put the bullets in a sock. They then took a taxicab to a friend's house, where Pasteur hid the .44 caliber handgun. The next day, after hearing that the police were looking for them, Pasteur and Miller left for Boston, where they were eventually found hiding in an apartment closet.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON APRIL 30, 2015**

On April 30, 2015, at the age of 34, Wilson Pasteur appeared before the Parole Board for his initial hearing, after serving 15 years of his life sentence. Pasteur was represented by two student attorneys from Harvard University's Prisoners Legal Assistance Project. One student attorney made an opening statement which covered both the crime and Pasteur's responsibility in the crime, as well as Pasteur's difficult childhood, his connection to gang life, his institutional adjustment, his family supports, his dedication to faith, and his plans for parole. Pasteur made an opening statement which included an apology to the victim's family, his own



family, and his son. He asked for forgiveness and said that he has tried to change, but that change has been hard.

Pasteur was slow to begin on an earnest path to rehabilitation and was equally resistant to renounce his gang affiliation. Although Pasteur began to spend some time taking programs and was very much involved in the Christian community, he admitted that he "still had demons, but was trying to be a righteous person." For many years, his life of incarceration was contradictory. On the one hand, he was attending programs that addressed issues of violence and substance abuse and was also attending religious services. On the other hand, Pasteur was still entrenched in the gang life, holding the rank of Sergeant. Pasteur admitted to getting unauthorized gang tattoos, as recently as 2009. He told the Board, however, that in 2014, he became involved with the formal renunciation process at MCI-Concord, but was found with gang related material and was terminated from the process. He explained that the materials he was caught with were the formal "walking papers," which the gang requires before allowing a member to disassociate from the gang. He insisted that he is very serious about his renunciation and that he has shown his commitment to that end by having more unauthorized tattoos in an effort to cover-up his gang-related tattoos.

In his description of the murder, Pasteur insisted to the Board that at all stages of the planning and execution of the "mission," he kept trying to leave and end his involvement. Pasteur said he only went with Miller because he [Miller] didn't have a key to get back in the house and he would have had to sleep outside. Pasteur said he "took the gun away from [Miller] after [Wright] gave it to [Miller] because I think of him as my little brother and didn't think he should have the gun." Pasteur described changing pants with Miller, so that he could carry the weapon concealed in his waistband. Before shooting the gun at the scene, Pasteur says that Miller was yelling, "Pull it out! Pull it out." At that time, Pasteur pulled out the gun, pointed it, and fired one shot. He said when he saw that someone was on the ground moving, "I tried to shoot again, but the gun wouldn't fire." Despite the self-serving statements of his alleged attempts to distance himself from the crime, Pasteur knowingly took a loaded .44 caliber handgun, changed clothes so that he could secretly carry it, and then purposefully discharged it at intended human targets.

Pasteur spent considerable time at the hearing explaining his religious pursuits by saying, "Before I went to prison I was a Protestant, but I blamed God for everything. Throughout my incarceration I was still exploring Christianity, but something was missing for me." Eventually, in 2012, Pasteur made the complete conversion to Islam. He now credits his faith for giving him the direction and accountability necessary to improve as a person. He said, "I try all the time to be a better person and it is hard. No matter how hard it is, I will not give up. I will just try harder."

When describing the programs that meant the most to him, Pasteur said that Alternatives to Violence was most beneficial because, "It dealt with a lot of issues. It helped me understand more about transforming power [in disagreements with others]. I can use humor or try to find common ground with the other person." He spoke about the importance of the Boston University classes and his law clerk training. He also discussed how he would like to continue educational pursuits in the area of law, if granted a parole. While there remains an active immigration detainer and order of deportation to Haiti, Pasteur articulated a parole plan that involved living with family members in Pennsylvania, if he is not deported. Alternatively,



Pasteur plans to live with his aunt in Haiti. He and his attorneys are looking into re-entry services that may be available in that country.


Pasteur's sister spoke in support of his parole and said that Pasteur would be welcome to live with her in Pennsylvania and that she would help his transition in any way she could. Essex County Assistant District Attorney Marcia Slingerland spoke in strong opposition to parole, drawing attention to Pasteur's continued gang affiliation and continued minimization of his responsibility for the crime.

### **III. DECISION**

Wilson Pasteur willingly participated in a plan to carry out a retaliatory attack on rival gang members, while using firearms. Pasteur admittedly broke into and entered a home to steal one of the weapons just prior to the murder. After his conviction, Pasteur remained entrenched in gang life within the prison walls. For many years, he avoided meaningful adjustment. He tried to give the appearance of rehabilitation by taking programs, but at the same time, he remained gang-affiliated. He received gang-related tattoos as recently as 2009, and continues to be labeled by the Department of Corrections as a validated member of a security threat group. Pasteur still minimizes his culpability and attempts to distance himself from his full role in the planning and execution of the murder. Although Pasteur gains strength and direction from his faith, it is necessary that he participate in more specific rehabilitative programs.

The standard we apply in assessing candidates for parole is set out in 120 C.M.R. 300.04, which provides that "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." Applying that appropriately high standard here, it is the unanimous opinion of the Board that Wilson Pasteur does not merit parole at this time because he is not rehabilitated. The review will be in three years, during which time Pasteur should commit to completing the formal renunciation process and to a more comprehensive rehabilitation that addresses substance abuse, conflict resolution, candor, and victim empathy.

*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.*

  
Michael J. Callahan, General Counsel

August 12, 2015  
Date