



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**ALBERT STARLING**

**W51563**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** December 13, 2016

**DATE OF DECISION:** June 26, 2017

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe

**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 five years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On November 27, 1991, in Norfolk Superior Court, Albert Starling pled guilty to the second degree murder of Norma Starling and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On December 14, 1990, at approximately 2:29 p.m., Foxboro police received a call from Norma Starling's daughter. Upon arrival, police found the dead body of Norma Starling in the master bedroom. At approximately 4:15 p.m., state police arrived on the scene. Upon further examination of the body, they observed a bullet wound to the head of the victim. At approximately 8:40 p.m., police were contacted by an attorney who advised that Albert Starling contacted him and stated that he had killed his wife and was planning on killing himself. On December 16, 1990, a different attorney brought Mr. Starling to the Foxboro Police Department, where he was subsequently charged with the murder of his wife. Police went to the victim's house with a set of keys confiscated from Mr. Starling, in order to see if any key fit the locks in

the house. They found one key that opened the garage. In addition, Mrs. Starling's daughter provided police with a letter from her father that expressed his love for his children and his remorse for what had happened. The letter included a statement that he couldn't help it.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON DECEMBER 13, 2016**

Albert Starling, now 72-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for his review hearing on December 13, 2016. He was represented by Attorney Brian Kelly. He had been denied parole after his initial hearing in 2005, as well as his review hearing in 2011. Mr. Starling is currently housed at MCI-Norfolk, where he has been employed as an account clerk in the cost shop since 1994. Mr. Starling made an opening statement that included an apology to his daughters for what he had done to their mother. He also asked for forgiveness.

Board Members questioned Mr. Starling about his marriage to the victim and the long history of volatility within the relationship. His responses indicated limited insight, as well as an inability to fully recognize his culpability in the events leading up to the murder of his estranged wife. Despite evidence to the contrary, Mr. Starling maintains that he was the victim of domestic violence. He ascertained that on the morning of December 14, 1990, he went to the Foxboro house to give \$100 to Mrs. Starling (money that she had requested). He also asked if she would watch the store, while he visited his mother out of state. Mr. Starling stated that it was never his intent to murder his wife. Rather, the tipping point for him came when Mrs. Starling made derogatory statements about his dying mother and then proceeded to slap him. He told the Board that he was mentally disturbed when he pulled out the gun. Mr. Starling indicated that during prior verbal altercations, he just walked away. This time, he just snapped.

Mr. Starling had been married to the victim for 25 years. He contends that they married for the wrong reasons, as she was pregnant with their eldest child. When pressed by the Board, he denied ever being abusive toward the victim. Mr. Starling could not provide a conceivable explanation as to why the victim pursued protection through the courts (when she obtained a restraining order in 1990, saying she "feared him"), or why the victim changed the locks on the house with the exception of that in the garage. He does, however, acknowledge violating the restraining order on a few occasions when he stopped by their residence.

The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from Norfolk County Assistant District Attorney Marguerite Grant.

## **III. DECISION**

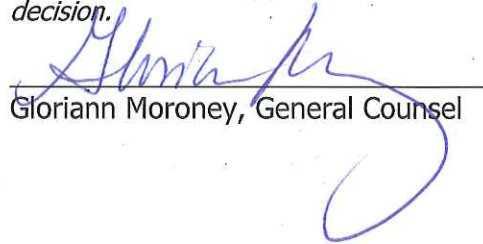
Albert Starling has served 26 years for his governing offenses, but was ill-prepared for his parole hearing. Mr. Starling has squandered any and all opportunities to rehabilitate. He remains a high risk individual. He has participated in minimal programming to address his causative factors. Mr. Starling has an unrealistic re-entry plan and, further, made self-serving statements at the hearing. In addition, Mr. Starling continues to provide inconsistent statements to the Board regarding his governing offense and portrays himself as the victim of domestic violence.

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

Mr. Starling's next appearance before the Board will take place in five years from the date of this hearing.

*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.*

  
Gloriann Moroney, General Counsel

6/26/17  
Date