



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

WILLIAM MITCHELL

W51474

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: August 8, 2017

DATE OF DECISION: June 18, 2018

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 the 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. Parole is granted to a long term residential program with special conditions, after successful completion of 6 months in lower security.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On November 14, 1991, after a jury trial in Essex Superior Court, William Mitchell was convicted of second degree murder in the death of 25-year-old Jeffrey Teague. Mr. Mitchell was 36-years-old at the time of the murder.

On April 25, 1990, at about 8 p.m., Jeffrey Teague and some of his friends gathered in his motel room at Salisbury Beach to play cards and watch television. At some point in the evening, Mr. Teague left to make a quick trip to a convenience store. Almost as soon as Mr. Teague left, Mr. Mitchell arrived at Mr. Teague's room with a hammer in the waist band of his trousers. Shortly after, Mr. Mitchell and one of Mr. Teague's friends had an argument, and Mr. Mitchell was asked to leave. On his way out, he smashed a window in the hotel room with his hammer. About 10 minutes after Mr. Mitchell left, Mr. Teague returned and was informed by his landlord that because of the damage to the window, he would have to vacate the premises.

Mr. Teague became angry and went across the street with four of his friends to confront Mr. Mitchell.

Upon arriving at his apartment, Mr. Teague called out to Mr. Mitchell, who opened the door a few inches. Mr. Teague demanded entrance, stating that he wanted to talk to him. Mr. Mitchell released the chain lock, opened the door, and came at Mr. Teague swinging two knives. Mr. Mitchell stabbed Mr. Teague several times in his chest and numerous times in his leg. When Mr. Mitchell stepped back, Mr. Teague's friends pulled Mr. Teague out of the apartment and helped him out of the building, where he collapsed and died soon after. Mr. Mitchell fled the scene, but police found him shortly thereafter in a nearby house. He was arrested and brought to a hospital. Mr. Mitchell was intoxicated and had blood on his face, clothing, and hands.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON AUGUST 8, 2017

William Mitchell, now 62-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on August 8, 2017, for a review hearing. He was not represented by counsel. He waived his initial hearing in 2005 and was denied parole at his review hearings in 2010 and 2015. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Mitchell said, "I am guilty and solely responsible for taking the life of Mr. Teague." He said that he sincerely regrets his actions and is now a "rehabilitated man" with 25 years of sobriety. When asked by a Board Member, he said that alcohol was his drug of choice. Mr. Mitchell also spoke about his triggers, as well as the avoidance of those triggers. A Board Member asked him whether he has identified any challenges, if he were to be out in the community. His response included "getting used to the outside world" and dealing with the use of computers. The Board asked Mr. Mitchell about other areas that he would have to address in order to be successful. He explained that he has a lot of medical problems and is hoping to be placed in a long term program, along with the possibility of obtaining social security.

Mr. Mitchell spoke about his upbringing, particularly as to how it lead him down this path. He said that his family (which did not include his mother) was abusive to him and said, "I got beat up all the time." When he finally left, he searched for his mother. Mr. Mitchell said he quit school in the ninth grade, but obtained his G.E.D., one of his biggest accomplishments. When asked by the Board, Mr. Mitchell explained that he used to work with Mr. Teague. In discussing the crime, Mr. Mitchell was not contesting the fact that he murdered Mr. Teague. Board Members asked how he could have handled things differently. Mr. Mitchell stated that "for one thing," he shouldn't have gone to the beach to drink. Rather, he should have gone to work.

Mr. Mitchell also spoke about the programs that he wrote to, if he were granted parole. It was recommended by a Board Member that he reach out to SPAN. He also told the Board that he is a law clerk in the library. When he has an opportunity to speak to others, his message is "don't drink, stay sober because there is a better life out there." In addition, Mr. Mitchell has completed the following programs since his last review hearing: Violence Reduction Program, General Population Maintenance Program, Anger Management Basic, Anger Management Advanced, and Anger Management Correspondence Course. He currently participates in the Graduate Maintenance Program. He also participated in AA during his incarceration. Mr. Mitchell listed his health issues to the Board: anxiety, spinal stenosis, degenerative neck disease, neuropathy in both legs, COPD, asthma, and GERD.

The Board considered testimony from Essex County Assistant District Attorney Emily Mello in opposition to parole.

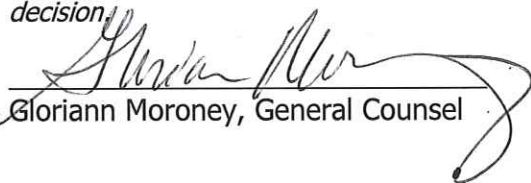
III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that William Mitchell has demonstrated rehabilitative progress and, consequently, has acquired the tools and skills that will assist him with a successful transition from incarceration. Mr. Miller has availed himself of rehabilitation. Since his last hearing, he has completed Violence Reduction and is currently in GMP (Graduate Maintenance Program). He is also active in NA/AA. Mr. Mitchell's release meets the legal standard.

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. Mitchell's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Mitchell's risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Mitchell's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Mr. Mitchell merits parole at this time. Parole is granted to a long term residential program (LTRP) with special conditions, after successful completion of 6 months in lower security.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for long term residential program (LTRP); Must be home between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; Electronic monitoring for 6 months, then at Parole Officer's discretion; Must take prescribed medication (on Percocet for pain management); 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 w/victim's family; Must have mental health evaluation for adjustment/transition; Long term residential treatment; AA/NA at least 3 times/week, Mandatory obtain a sponsor, Mandatory sign for release of medical records for review by MA Parole Board.

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


Date