



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

12 Mercer Road
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Daniel Bennett
Secretary

Telephone # (508) 650-4500
Facsimile # (508) 650-4599

Paul M. Treseler
Chairman

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

DONALD THOMPSON

W85478

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: July 27, 2017

DATE OF DECISION: July 25, 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 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 May 9, 2005, in Worcester Superior Court, Donald Thompson pleaded guilty to the second degree murder of Lindsay Hazard. Mr. Thompson was subsequently sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On Friday, August 23, 2002, at approximately 2:37 a.m., Worcester police officers responded to 20 Rodney Street in Worcester. The officers were advised that a female was being assaulted and stabbed on the second floor of a three family dwelling. Upon arrival, one officer stayed with two witnesses, while the other officer entered the dwelling. The officer proceeded to the second floor and observed a female, later identified as Lindsay Hazard, lying in a pool of blood on the second floor landing. The victim had multiple stab wounds to the left side of her body. A trail of blood was also observed on the third floor stairway. The officer stated that the

victim was alert when he found her. She gave her name and identified Donald Thompson as the person that stabbed her. Ms. Hazard then succumbed to her injuries. Mr. Thompson was arrested the next day.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON JULY 27, 2017

Donald Thompson, now 57-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on July 27, 2017, for an initial hearing. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Thompson is currently serving his sentence at MCI-Concord. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Thompson apologized to Ms. Hazard's family and expressed his deep regret for the pain and sorrow that he caused. Mr. Thompson said that he is "still in shock" and "haunted by the thought of what happened." Mr. Thompson stated that, while he takes responsibility for the situation, it was not his intention to murder Ms. Hazard.

In discussing his upbringing and personal life, Mr. Thompson explained that he had a fairly uneventful, but happy, childhood. He was born in Jamaica and moved to the United States in 1973. He attended high school and college in New York and received an associate's degree in electrical engineering. Mr. Thompson then moved to Massachusetts with his (former) wife and daughter. He stated that sometime after moving to Massachusetts, he and his wife separated, and she moved back to New York. Later in the hearing, however, the Board noted that Mr. Thompson's prior wife had a restraining order against him. Mr. Thompson said that he met Ms. Hazard in 2001 and had known her for a little over a year before the murder. He claimed that they were not in a committed relationship. The Board noted an incident between them (sometime before the murder) that resulted in Mr. Thompson being charged with assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon, and threatening to kill, among other charges.

The Board questioned Mr. Thompson as to why he went to Ms. Hazard's apartment on the night of the murder.¹ There were a variety of reasons as to why Mr. Thompson claimed to be at her house. He claimed that she called him that night and told him she did not feel safe. Mr. Thompson also said that, at the time, he was homeless and went to Ms. Hazard's apartment to charge his phone. He also claimed that he went to her apartment because she was going to sell him marijuana. Mr. Thompson said that Ms. Hazard vented to him about her life and asked him for money. He claims that she accosted him, and then, he noticed she had a knife. At some point, she dropped the knife and they started wrestling for it. He explained that one of his hands was injured from a prior event, so Ms. Hazard was able to grab his windpipe. He claimed that she was stabbed, while both of them were holding the knife. He said that he was pushing the knife away from himself and towards her. The Board questioned Mr. Thompson as to how she could be stabbed 12 times, if she was also holding the knife. After recounting the events leading to Ms. Hazard's death, the Board indicated that instead of taking responsibility for his actions, Mr. Thompson placed the blame on the victim. Mr. Thompson, however, refuted this statement.

Mr. Thompson has participated in limited programming, and the last program he completed was in 2007. Mr. Thompson has been employed in various occupations since incarcerated. He has participated in such programs as Introduction to Treatment, Thinking for a Change, Introduction to 12 Step, and Relapse Prevention. The Board asked Mr. Thompson if he believed that he could benefit from additional programming. Mr. Thompson said that since he is a low risk, he does "not really" believe that there are areas of improvement for him to work on.

¹ Ms. Hazard lived in the apartment. However, Ms. Hazard's boyfriend (at the time) owned the apartment.

The Board believes, however, that Mr. Thompson could benefit from programming to address his impulsivity and violence.

The Board considered oral testimony from the victim's mother and sister in opposition to parole. The Board considered oral testimony from Worcester County Assistant District Attorney Michelle King in opposition to parole.

III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Thompson has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Thompson is serving his first commitment. He has a long history of violence against women and has yet to address his propensity for impulsivity and violence. Mr. Thompson appears to have no apparent insight into the risks for future criminal behavior.

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. Thompson'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 the risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Thompson's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Thompson's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Donald Thompson is not yet rehabilitated and therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Thompson's next appearance before the Board will take place in five years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Thompson 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.



Gloriann Moroney, General Counsel

7/25/18
Date