



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

CHE RASHAWN POPE

W65215

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: July 21, 2011

DATE OF DECISION: August 16, 2012

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Cesar Archilla, John Bocon, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Ina Howard-Hogan, Roger Michel, Lucy Soto-Abbe, Josh Wall

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Parole is denied. The next hearing will be in three years. The decision is unanimous.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Che Rashawn Pope, age 17, had prior disagreements with the victim Sadrac Barlatier, age 17. Mr. Pope made plans to kill Mr. Barlatier. Mr. Pope was a member of the Mattapan Dawgs gang and had easy access to firearms. On the morning of October 11, 1995, Mr. Pope left his house with a mask, grabbed a gun from its stash location, and walked to Mattapan Square smoking a blunt and looking for Mr. Barlatier. Once he spotted his intended victim, who was walking through the Square heading towards the bus stop, Mr. Pope put on the mask and moved the gun from his waistband into the pocket of his sweatshirt. He approached the victim and told him "your time has come." As the victim ran, Mr. Pope pulled the gun out and shot Mr. Barlatier in the back. The victim fell but got back up to run to the bus. Mr. Pope fired three more times as the victim frantically dove under the bus for cover. The bus began moving forward and drove over the victim crushing his skull.

Mr. Pope was arrested several days later. He pleaded guilty in Suffolk Superior Court to second-degree murder on September 8, 1998.

Mr. Pope was charged with seven violent crimes as a juvenile and was convicted of four of those crimes, including using a gun in an assault with a dangerous weapon. When he committed the murder, Mr. Pope was on bail on his first adult case which charged him with assault and battery and larceny from a person. He was convicted of those crimes and served a commitment of two years. He began serving that commitment while awaiting trial on the murder case.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON JULY 21, 2011

This is the first parole hearing for Che Pope. He admitted that he had been planning the murder and looking for the victim; he carried the mask and the gun every day in preparation for the murder. He said he had a leadership role in the Mattapan Dawgs. He believed that the victim had killed a friend of his and avenging that killing was the primary motive for this murder. He admitted to the facts involved in his other criminal cases, including a 1993 dismissed case in which Mr. Pope described using a knife in a fight. The adult case in 1995 involved "grabbing a chain."

Mr. Pope has completed many programs at the Department of Correction. He obtained a GED and welder's certification. He attends AA and 12 Steps to address substance abuse issues. His rehabilitative programs include Correctional Recovery Academy, Alternatives to Violence (five workshops), Emotional Awareness, Problem Solving, Anger Management, Able Minds Cognitive Thinking, and Fatherhood Program.

He stated that the programs have taught him how to "think steps ahead; I can see problems coming so there is always time to stop and think; I can use critical thinking to help solve problems without violence." He described the sequence of events in his life and his emotional development that resulted in his anger.

The inmate receives positive housing and work evaluations; he works in the laundry. He has 12 disciplinary reports with the last one in 2004. He has not been returned to higher custody.

Five witnesses testified in support of parole, and they described family and community support for Mr. Pope. Suffolk Assistant District Attorney Charles Bartoloni spoke in opposition to parole. Mr. Bartoloni described how the "cold-blooded murder" affected the Mattapan community by terrifying parents and children who were in the Square that morning on the way to school and work.

III. DECISION

Che Pope has used his 15 years of incarceration productively and positively. His conduct has been above average and he has spent his time pursuing rehabilitative programs to address criminal thinking, anger and violence, and substance abuse. At his hearing, Mr. Pope admitted his criminal behavior, described the reasons for his violence, and discussed the progress he has made in his rehabilitation. Fifteen years for this crime, however, is insufficient to achieve the four sentencing goals of deterrence, punishment, rehabilitation, and public protection. He planned a murder and was prepared for several days to commit the murder. His plan showed no regard for his victim or his community. As Assistant District Attorney Bartoloni noted, the

crime had a significant community impact for which Mr. Pope had no concern. Understanding Mr. Pope's gang lifestyle, extensive planning for the murder, and disregard for his community, the Parole Board concludes that rehabilitation requires significant time and commitment. Because the period of incarceration is not yet sufficient to achieve the rehabilitation necessary for community re-entry, parole is denied because it is not compatible with the welfare of society and re-offense is not improbable. The period of review will be shortened to three years in recognition of the progress that Che Pope has made. Mr. Pope needs to continue his productive activity in prison and establish a longer track record of good conduct and rehabilitative programs to develop insight and address issues of anger, violence, criminal thinking, and substance abuse.

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing.


Caitlin E. Casey, Chief of Staff


Date