



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD

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**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**RICHARD SEAVER**

**(now known as Bodhisattva Skandha)**

**W28163**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Revocation Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** October 1, 2013

**DATE OF DECISION:** November 1, 2013

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Ina Howard-Hogan, Lucy Soto-Abbe, Josh Wall

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, institutional record, the testimony of the inmate at the hearing, the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the Board, we conclude by a unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole at this time. Parole is denied with a review in four years.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On January 4, 1960, 18-year-old Richard Seaver brutally murdered his mother, Eleanor Seaver, age 42, in Melrose. That day, Seaver had asked his mother for permission to marry a 16-year-old girl from Roxbury. Ms. Seaver declined to give her permission and her son responded by stabbing her repeatedly with a pair of scissors, striking her with a hammer, and stabbing her with a knife. Finally, he took a jump rope and an electrical cord and tied them around her neck to stop her from coughing. Seaver then put her body in a closet, covering it with blankets and other linens. He removed the knob from the closet door, took his mother's money, checkbook, and car, and left. Later that night, Seaver was taken into custody by Boston Police on an unrelated matter. He told them that he had stabbed his mother and put her body in a closet. The next day, Seaver gave a statement to Melrose Police admitting to the crime. At the time that Seaver murdered his mother, he was under juvenile parole supervision.

Seaver pleaded guilty to second-degree murder on November 30, 1960, in Middlesex Superior Court and was sentenced to serve life in prison. In 1972, Seaver filed a petition for executive clemency in the form of a commutation. His petition was granted in 1973, and his sentence was commuted to a term of 30 years to life.

He was first paroled in January of 1974, and received his first violation in June of that same year for irresponsible conduct and for leaving the state for an extended period without obtaining permission from his parole officer. He was not returned to custody, and instead remained in the community. He received another violation in November of 1974 for irresponsible behavior for again leaving the state for an extended period without permission. He was permitted to remain in the community. Seaver's third violation occurred in 1976 for being whereabouts unknown, and his fourth for leaving the state of California, where he was then being supervised, without permission. He was eventually returned to custody in 1985, and re-paroled in April 1986. In September of that year, he again went whereabouts unknown, and remained at large for over 20 months, which resulted in the revocation of his parole. He was re-paroled in 1989, but returned to custody in 1992 for failing to advise his parole officer of a change in address and for alcohol consumption. This triggered revocation proceedings and, ultimately, revocation of Seaver's parole. Following this last revocation, the Parole Board denied parole after hearings in 1993, 1996, 2000, 2003, and 2008.

Seaver filed a post-conviction motion for relief over forty years after he entered his guilty plea. That motion was denied, as was the subsequent appeal and petition for Supreme Judicial Court review. *Commonwealth v. Seaver*, 65 Mass. App. Ct. 1116 (2006), *rev. denied*, 446 Mass. 1108 (2006).

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON OCTOBER 1, 2013**

Richard Seaver has a remarkable parole history: he received clemency that permitted an early parole from his life sentence; he had several serious violations that did not result in revocation of parole; he was revoked in 1985 and re-paroled in 1986; he was revoked in 1988 and re-paroled in 1989; and finally, he was revoked in 1992 and has been denied re-parole five consecutive times. The Parole Board gave him repeated chances, but Seaver never reached a level of rehabilitation that allowed him to comply with society's and parole's expectations.

At his last hearing, in 2008, Seaver was combative and defiant. He took the position that he was not at fault for his parole violations and gave no evidence of rehabilitation. He gave every impression that he had no interest in complying with the rules of community supervision. At this hearing, Seaver's presentation was much improved. He recognized his fault in his parole failures and was less defensive and combative in discussing what had gone wrong in the past. Moreover, his attitude and tone were open and cooperative, which allowed him to present more information to the Board and describe the steps he has taken to improve his behavior.

Unfortunately for Mr. Seaver, he has not invested in rehabilitative programming at MCI – Norfolk. When asked what are your daily activities in prison, he responded, "None; I read." He recounted an extensive reading list of novels and mysteries, but said his last rehabilitative program was in 2003. He said, "I've taken all the programs they offer." In fact, there are many programs offered at MCI-Norfolk that Seaver has not taken.

Board Members asked Seaver about the anger that propelled the murder. He said, "When I killed my mother was the only time I've been in that state of rage; I have dealt with the anger through 10 years of counseling." The counseling occurred at the Department of Correction in the decade before his first parole. He saw a counselor "a couple of times" on the first parole, but he reported that "I wasn't mature enough to take advantage; the lure of the interstate was too much."

Mental health history was also discussed at the hearing. Seaver noted that, "I cut my arms a few times" which resulted in psychological evaluations. Seaver recalled that a personality test led to a conclusion that "I was intelligent but could be devious; I cut myself for attention; that was the devious part."

There were two issues related to performance on parole that were not resolved at this hearing. There is conclusive evidence that Seaver drank alcohol numerous times or regularly on parole. He denied that, and said, "I got drunk once in California and I took one sip of champagne at my wedding." Parole Board Members did not believe that account. In addition, there is considerable information that Seaver displayed anger and violence with his wife. He denied that he exhibited any domestic violence.

There were no supporters of parole present. Middlesex Assistant District Attorney Carrie Spiros spoke in opposition to parole.

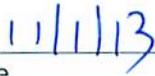
### **III. DECISION**

Richard Seaver brutally murdered his mother and squandered multiple opportunities on parole. At his last hearing in 2008, he clearly demonstrated that he was not rehabilitated. At this hearing, he showed considerable progress in insight and attitude. Mr. Seaver is an intelligent man and he made a wise choice to avoid the combativeness and defiance that led to his denial in 2008. He has not, however, invested in rehabilitation through program work and other commitments. Mr. Seaver obtained three prior paroles because he made a smooth presentation that obscured a lack of reform. The Parole Board now expects an inmate to invest in rehabilitation through active program participation with demonstrated results. Mr. Seaver has not met this expectation and the Parole Board is unwilling to overlook that expectation.

The standard 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 an 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, parole is denied with a review in four years.

*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 each member of the Board has reviewed the applicant's entire criminal record. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.*

  
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Janis DiLoreto Noble, General Counsel

  
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Date