



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD

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Chairman

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**JEREMIAH TORRES**

**W54666**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Revocation Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** May 8, 2012

**DATE OF DECISION:** May 8, 2013<sup>1</sup>

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Cesar Archilla, Charlene Bonner, Sheila Dupre, Ina Howard-Hogan, Roger Michel, Lucy Soto-Abbe, Josh Wall.

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying 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 writing, we conclude by unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole at this time. Parole is denied with a review in five years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On May 8, 2012, Jeremiah Torres appeared before the Parole Board as a parole violator for a revocation review hearing. He was paroled on July 8, 2008, to the Harmony House. He received graduated sanctions in January, August, and November of 2009, for a number of violations, including: lying to his parole officer, failure to pay supervision fees, failure to obtain employment, and failure to be at his approved home. He was required to attend the community corrections center for services because he failed to report reliably to his parole officer in April 2009. In January 2011, he was ordered to attend anger management, mental health counseling, and wear a GPS monitor. In total, he received six graduated sanctions.

In July 2011, GPS revealed that he was going to liquor stores. One of his conditions of parole was to abstain from alcohol, which triggered an investigation that revealed that Mr.

<sup>1</sup> This decision was delayed because it had been assigned to an employee who left the agency without completing the decision. The Parole Board regrets the uncertainty and inconvenience that this delay caused to those involved.

Torres had purchased alcohol on a number of occasions. He was taken into custody, and revocation proceedings began, for violating parole by lying to parole officers, drinking alcohol, and irresponsible conduct. The Board affirmed the revocation on March 8, 2012.

On June 18, 1993, Jeremiah Torres pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of 28-year-old Lisa Lee Dolley and was sentenced to serve life in prison. In 2001, he filed a motion for a new trial seeking to withdraw his plea. The motion was denied, and the Appeals Court affirmed the denial in 2003. *Commonwealth v. Torres*, 57 Mass. App. Ct. 1111 (2003). The Supreme Judicial Court denied a subsequent petition for further appellate review.

Sometime after midnight on January 3, 1993, Jeremiah Torres stabbed the victim 28 times in Springfield. Prior to the murder, the victim had been at a bar, My Place Lounge, and left with Mr. Torres around midnight. The next morning, her body was discovered in a vacant lot. Subsequent police investigation revealed that Mr. Torres went to his girlfriend's home in the early hours of January 3 and began banging on her door. He was hysterical, screaming and kicking at the door, and saying that he had "killed." The police seized Mr. Torres' car, searched it, and discovered a substantial amount of blood inside. Mr. Torres was arrested a few weeks after the murder. He claimed that the victim had made an unwanted sexual advance toward him, would not get out of his car when he asked her to do so, and that his mind went blank when he stabbed her.

An autopsy revealed that Ms. Dolley had been stabbed 28 times in the stomach, chest, hands, leg, and back. The Medical Examiner determined that 13 to 15 of those stabs wounds were severe enough to cause death.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON MAY 8, 2012**

Jeremiah Torres received parole after his first parole hearing in 2008. At his first hearing, Mr. Torres told the Parole Board that he was able to work and would have no trouble finding employment, and that he had no mental health issues. These things were not accurate. He had a number of problems on parole leading up to his alcohol use: lying to his parole officer; anger issues that caused program staff to fear him; failure to seek employment; unclear where he was and what he was doing every day; lack of motivation; and lack of cooperation. The parole officer said that Mr. Torres made himself "unavailable for supervision."

The case notes lead to the conclusion that Mr. Torres did not want to work, that he preferred public assistance, that he was not interested in productive activity, that his self-reports were unreliable and misleading, and that he was resistant to supervision. When his welfare and food stamp benefits expired, he sought disability benefits. When his disability benefits were denied, he appealed and was eventually approved. He said that he has "a curve in my spine and chronic arthritis." At his 2008 parole hearing that resulted in his release, Mr. Torres told the Parole Board nothing about pain or medical issues that might affect his ability to work. It is not clear if one of the grounds for disability is post-traumatic stress disorder. At the hearing, Mr. Torres said that he has post-traumatic stress disorder from having committed the murder. Despite the fact that his physical issues resulted in disability benefits, he did not mention these issues to the Department of Correction's examining physician when he was returned to custody. His failure to mention his disabling condition for treatment purposes adds to the spectrum of impropriety surrounding these issues. It appears that Mr. Torres either

misrepresented his ability to work at his 2008 parole hearing or he manipulated the federal benefits system after release.

Mr. Torres said that he returned to alcohol use because "I was nervous and depressed." When asked what made him nervous and depressed, he blamed the Parole Board for adding a condition that he wear a GPS device for monitoring. He said, "I didn't understand GPS; why did they do that?" He suggested that his only outings were to go to church, and therefore GPS was uncalled for. A Board Member commented that "you are gravely offended that the Parole Board required a GPS device; you complain that we had the nerve to monitor you." Mr. Torres saw no faults with his performance on parole, which he described as "good." He saw many faults with his parole officers and with the conditions set by the Parole Board. When a Board Member asked him what he would do differently if re-paroled, he offered no suggestions.

In listening to Mr. Torres describe that he stabbed the victim because of her offensive conduct, Board Members concluded that he is not being truthful about what he did and why he did it. Mr. Torres introduced, apparently for the first time, the idea that he had a "blackout" after drinking seven or eight beers and smoking "one or two joints" the night of the murder. He said he carried a knife because drug dealers had threatened him because his brother was a police officer. He admitted that he returned to his girlfriend's home after the murder, where he screamed at her 14-year-old son to open the door and threatened to kill "you and your mother." He then yelled at his girlfriend and threatened to kill her. Mr. Torres' conviction was based on an Alford plea, in which the defendant is not required to admit guilt. An Alford plea is rarely used in Massachusetts and it is unclear why the judge permitted an Alford plea in a murder case which included the defendant's admissions to police that he stabbed the victim.

In addition to the insufficient description of the crime, Mr. Torres does not recognize and has not addressed the anger issues that led to his homicidal rage. He did admit that he hit his girlfriend, but that antisocial behavior did not appear to concern him. Shortly after the murder, his father told investigators that Mr. Torres has a violent temper when drinking. Mr. Torres had two relationships that included considerable domestic violence. The incidents involved serious physical beatings and assaults with a knife. A Board Member asked if the murder and the abusive relationships show that he has a problem with violence directed at women. Mr. Torres said, "I didn't just abuse women, if a man wanted a fight, I would fight him too." Mr. Torres said he has addressed his anger issues through Alternatives to Violence and anger management classes. When a Board Member asked him how to prevent a future alcohol relapse if re-paroled, Mr. Torres said, "Trust me, I won't drink again."

Hampden Assistant District Attorney Diane Dillon spoke in opposition to parole. Mr. Torres' mother and brother attended the hearing, but did not testify.

### **III. DECISION**

Jeremiah Torres committed a terrifying murder in which he stabbed a helpless, intoxicated woman 28 times, with 13 to 15 of those wounds severe enough to cause death. Mr. Torres was paroled after his first hearing. The decision was apparently based on good conduct. He had no disciplinary reports during his incarceration, but his program participation was below average, his description of the crime is unlikely, and the cause of his violent conduct is unexplored and unexplained. He was paroled without a transition through lower security. Not

surprisingly, he was unsuccessful on parole. He showed little interest in employment, displayed unresolved anger issues, was resistant to supervision, was dishonest with his parole officer, and relapsed with regular alcohol abuse. Mr. Torres' performance on parole confirmed that he is not rehabilitated. At this hearing, Mr. Torres accepted no responsibility for his performance on parole, had no understanding of the reasons for his failure, and no suggestions on how he might do better.

The standard we apply in assessing candidates 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 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 here, the Board finds that Mr. Torres is not a suitable candidate for parole. Accordingly, parole is denied, with a review in five years.

*I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.*

*Josh Wall*

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Josh Wall, Chairman

*May 8, 2013*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date