



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

EDWARD STARLING

W35911

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: April 18, 2013

DATE OF DECISION: February 7, 2014

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Cesar Archilla, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Shelia 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 inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submission to the Board, 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.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Edward Starling appeared before the Massachusetts Parole Board for a review hearing on the life sentence he is currently serving at MCI-Norfolk. Starling received this sentence in Suffolk Superior Court on December 16, 1976 after a jury found him guilty of second-degree murder in the death of twenty-two-month-old Laquita Prout.

On May 24, 1974, Edward Starling, age 19, and Janet Prout had been residing in an apartment in Dorchester for about a month with Janet Prout's twenty-two-month-old daughter, Laquita Prout. Laquita was small for her age and suffering from eczema and "failure to thrive." On the same day, between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. the following morning, Starling was babysitting alone with Laquita in the apartment. Early in the morning, he knocked on the door of the next apartment, said there was something wrong with the baby, called an ambulance and left to look for Ms. Prout. Upon arrival the ambulance attendant found Laquita dead and contacted the

police. Starling informed the police that the child had fallen out of bed twice. He told the police that the second time Laquita fell out of bed, she was having trouble breathing, her eyes went back in her head, and she fell asleep and then regained consciousness and started to choke.

Later that same morning a medical examiner performed an autopsy and determined that Laquita's death was caused by lacerations of the liver, with hemorrhage into the abdominal cavity, as a result of one or more "very severe" blows to the chest or abdomen with a blunt instrument such as a fist, a foot, or a board. The medical examiner further opined that the injuries were not consistent with a fall from a bed or table, or with banging on the back to quiet wheezing or coughing and that death occurred within a matter of seconds or minutes after the injury.

Starling was arrested the same day. He failed to appear at his next court date, and was found in Newark, New Jersey, in January 1976, living under an assumed name.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON APRIL 18, 2013

This is Edward Starling's seventh appearance before the Board. He had an initial parole hearing on January 14, 1991, followed by review hearings in 1992, 1996, 1999, 2002¹, and 2008. In previous votes the Board noted the serious nature of the offense, and Starling's assaultive history and behavior while incarcerated. When questioned by Board Members about the rescission of the 2002 reserve vote, Starling stated, "I picked up a petty d-report in Norfolk." Several Board Members reminded the inmate that he received several disciplinary reports after his 2002 reserve vote resulting in a return from pre-release to higher custody.

Board Members questioned Starling about the murder, his institutional behavior, and programming. Starling described the murder of Laquita Prout, stating, "I was high on acid and I had a bad trip; I thought she was a spider monkey, I thought she was trying to hurt me so I threw her across the room; I walked over and I may have kicked or stomped her like they said." He concluded, "It's not in my nature to harm anyone." The Board inquired about his being a defendant in a murder trial two months before the death of Laquita Prout resulting in an acquittal. Starling initially informed the Board that he would rather not talk about the murder charge, stating, "I don't know anything about that." Then he stated, "They say I shot some guy."

Since his last hearing, Starling has engaged in minimal formal programming. He completed Jericho Circle Project in 2012, a week long Active Listening Workshop in 2009, Problem Solving in 2009, and A.B.L.E. Minds in 2008. Starling has received approximately 50 disciplinary reports, his last being in August of 2010. He informed the Board that his disciplinary record resulted from "poor decisions."

Currently, he is a maintenance worker and attends weekly AA/NA meetings, as well as Lifer's group meetings, Young Father's meetings and religious group.

¹ Following his February 21, 2002 hearing, the Board voted to reserve Starling to an approved home plan after 6 months in pre-release. This vote was rescinded in 2008 after Starling received several disciplinary reports.

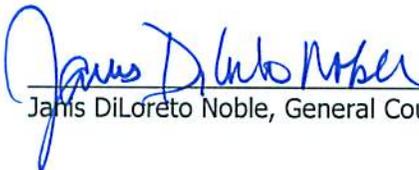
There were no supporters of parole in attendance.

III. DECISION

Edward Starling committed a violent assault on a twenty-two-month-old child resulting in the child's death. He has little insight into his volatile behavior and he has minimal programming efforts to address his violent behavior since his last hearing.

The standard for parole as 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 this standard, the Board concludes that Mr. Starling is not suitable for parole because he is not rehabilitated. 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. 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.


James DiLoreto Noble, General Counsel


Date