



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

ISRAEL PEREZ

W80504

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing
DATE OF HEARING: October 22, 2015
DATE OF DECISION: December 14, 2015

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sheila Dupre, Tonomey Coleman, Ina Howard-Hogan, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe.

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 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 four years from the date of the hearing.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On June 21, 2002, in Essex Superior Court, Israel Perez pled guilty to the second degree murder and armed robbery of Juan Vasquez. Subsequently he was sentenced to life in prison, with the possibility of parole. Simultaneously, Mr. Perez was sentenced to a term of imprisonment not less than 10 years and not more than 12 years for the armed robbery. Mr. Perez is currently 37 years old.

During December of 1997, Mr. Perez was living in Lawrence Massachusetts, after having moved there from Puerto Rico in 1992. On the evening of Mr. Vasquez's death, December 30th, Mr. Perez was with a friend, Ricardo Reyes. Both men needed money and planned to rob a taxi cab driver with Mr. Reyes's pistol. Mr. Vasquez was working as a taxi cab driver in the Methuen area on the night of December 30th, when he picked up Mr. Perez and Mr. Reyes.

In the area of 7 Chelmsford Street in Methuen, Mr. Perez and Mr. Reyes robbed Mr. Vasquez. During the course of the robbery, Mr. Vasquez was shot once in the back of his head. His body was discovered approximately two hours later by local police responding to a call for a suspicious vehicle. Both Mr. Perez and Mr. Reyes had fled the scene to a bowling alley in Lawrence, where they sold the pistol. Mr. Perez and Mr. Reyes maintained their freedom for approximately two and one half years, during a prolonged investigation.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON OCTOBER 22, 2015

Mr. Perez came before the Parole Board on October 22, 2015 for his initial hearing. Mr. Perez gave an opening statement to the Board, in which he apologized for his actions and expressed remorse.

During the course of the hearing, Mr. Perez spoke about the night of the murder. After admitting that at the time he was a member of the Latin Gangster Disciples, Mr. Perez explained that he had supported himself by selling drugs. A day before the murder, he learned his drug inventory had been stolen and he needed money. The following day, he and Mr. Reyes met and planned to rob a taxi cab driver, using Mr. Reyes's pistol.

Mr. Perez described how he placed the gun against the back of Mr. Vasquez's head, as Mr. Reyes held a knife to his throat and demanded money. Although Mr. Vasquez complied with their demand, he continued to move around in his seat. Mr. Perez explained to the Board that at the time he thought Mr. Vasquez might be reaching for a weapon, so he shot him in the back of the head. Mr. Perez stated he now understands Mr. Vasquez was just nervous. Both men then fled the scene and sold the pistol at a pool hall in Lawrence, later that night.

Over the course of the hearing, Mr. Perez explained he had suffered from physical abuse as a child and had been engaged in substance abuse at the time of the murder. Mr. Perez turned to the Latin Gangster Disciples because of the sense of family they provided. Mr. Perez expressed his belief to the Board that his institutional programming and sobriety has helped him to progress over the course of his incarceration. When asked about his future plans if he was released, Mr. Perez stated he wanted to spend time with his family and work as a barber, but acknowledged having no training or experience in the field.

Mr. Perez renounced his membership in the Latin Gangster Disciples in 2004. In 2007, however, Mr. Perez received a disciplinary report for getting a new gang related tattoo. Mr. Perez could offer no explanation to the Board, when asked about this contradiction, except to say it was a mistake. Mr. Perez again renounced his membership with the Latin Gangster Disciples in 2009, after his involvement in a large scale prison fight involving multiple gangs. In that confrontation, Mr. Perez injured a rival gang member so severely the inmate required admission to an intensive care unit.

III. DECISION

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Perez has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. The Board believes a longer period of positive institutional adjustment and programming, including anger management and job skills training, would be beneficial to Mr. Perez's rehabilitation.

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. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Perez's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Mr. Perez is not yet rehabilitated and therefore does not merit parole at this time. Mr. Perez's next appearance before the Board will take place in four years from the date of the initial hearing related to this decision. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Perez to continue working towards his full rehabilitation by committing to programming that will address his anger issues. The Board also encourages Mr. Perez to stay discipline report free and to maintain his renunciation of membership in the Latin Gangster Disciples.

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.



Michael J. Callahan, Executive Director



Date