

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BRUCE RAUNER, GOVERNOR  
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD

**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET: MEETING OF FEBRUARY 26, 2015**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open En Banc session at 319 E. Madison Street Suite A, Springfield, IL, on February 26, 2015, at the 8:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following inmates:

<b>C56160</b>	<b>JOHN TILLER</b>
<b>C10644</b>	<b>FRANKLIN JOHNSON</b>
<b>L11790</b>	<b>JOE WILLHITE</b>
<b>C91504</b>	<b>EARL JONES</b>
<b>C71613</b>	<b>DANNY LILLARD</b>
<b>C93447</b>	<b>WILLIE ROBINSON</b>

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Monreal  
Roll call was taken by the Recording Secretary: Gabriela Chavez Barrientos

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Angela Blackman-Donovan	X	
Ed Bowers	X	
Edith Crigler	X	
Salvador Diaz	X	
Craig Findley	X	
Eric Gregg	X	
Vonetta Harris	X	
Tom Johnson	X	
William Norton	X	
Jennifer Parrack	X	
Donald Shelton	X	
Adam Monreal	X	

**12 Members Present**

The Recording Secretary presented the following minutes for approval:  
Open Session Minutes from January 2015. (ADM - CF) Leave

Meeting was adjourned (ADM – JP). Leave.  
Submitted by: Gabriela Chavez Barrientos, Recording Secretary

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**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET- OPEN SESSION  
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Inmate Name: **Willie Robinson** IDOC Number & Institution: **C93447**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open En Banc session at 319 E. Madison Street, Springfield, IL, on February 26, at the 8:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Inmate Willie Robinson, IDOC # C93447.

Members present were: Chairman A. Monreal, A. Blackman-Donovan, E. Bowers, E. Crigler, S. Diaz, E. Gregg, C. Findley, V. Harris, T. Johnson, W. Norton, J. Parrack, D. Shelton  
Other(s) present: Gabriela Chavez Barrientos, Recording Secretary

Summary of discussion for parole consideration: Member Norton presented a summary of the parole interview and a review of all file materials.

Mr. Norton stated that a parole assessment interview was conducted with Willie Robinson on January 22, 2015. Mr. Robinson was born on May 5, 1949, is currently sixty-five (65) years of age and was a resident of Menard Correctional Center on the date of the interview. According to Mr. Norton, Mr. Robinson is serving a sentence of 500-1000 years for the offense of Murder, 150-300 years for the offense of Attempted Murder, and 6 2/3-20 years for the offense of Aggravated Kidnapping, with all of the sentences to run concurrent.

Mr. Norton shared that the file and record indicate that on or about January 19, 1978, Mr. Robinson and Co-Defendant Larry Hamilton were traveling on Interstate 94 near Harvey, Illinois when the vehicle being driven by Larry Hamilton rear ended a vehicle being driven by Mark Furman as his wife Claudia Furman was in the front passenger seat. Mr. and Mrs. Furman were on their way home after attending a basketball game between Marquette University and De Paul University. Following the accident, both Larry Hamilton and Mark Furman exited their respective vehicle to inspect the damage, and then returned to their vehicle to wait for the police to arrive. At the request of Mr. Furman, Claudia Furman wrote down the license plate number and the make and model of the vehicle which was driven by Larry Hamilton. After a short period of time, both Larry Hamilton and Willie Robinson again approached the Furman vehicle with Larry Hamilton at the front driver side of the vehicle and with Willie Robinson at the front passenger side of the vehicle, at which time both Hamilton and Robinson pulled their loaded weapons and began firing into the Furman vehicle. Mark Furman was killed and his wife Claudia Furman was shot. Robinson then took the purse of Claudia Furman from the front floorboard of the Furman vehicle and grabbed the arm of Claudia Furman trying to remove her from the vehicle and stated "you are coming with us." Following a struggle, Robinson then dropped the purse and then struck Claudia Furman in the head 4 or 5 times with the butt end of his pistol with such force that the grips of the pistol broke into several pieces. Both Hamilton and Robinson then fled the scene in their vehicle along with another passenger in their vehicle by the name of Marcea Holman. Once help arrived at the scene, Claudia Furman was able to provide the authorities with the make, model and license plate number of the vehicle of the offenders which was registered to Marie Hamilton, the mother of Larry Hamilton, and within a short period of time both Larry Hamilton and Willie Robinson were arrested by police. An autopsy revealed that Mark Furman had been shot eleven times and he died as a result of these gunshot wounds. Claudia Furman had two bullet wounds to her right arm and a fracture to her right arm. In addition, Claudia Furman sustained multiple wounds to her head from being struck with a pistol which

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required seventy-five stitches. The weapon used by Larry Hamilton in this crime and the weapon used by Willie Robinson in this crime were both located at the residence of the mother of Larry Hamilton. Pieces of the pistol grips found in the Furman vehicle were a match to one of the handguns found by police at the residence of the mother of Larry Hamilton. Mr. Norton shared that further testing determined that both of these weapons were used in this brutal and vicious attack on Mark Furman and Claudia Furman. Both Larry Hamilton and Willie Robinson were found guilty following a jury trial and their convictions and extensive sentences were affirmed on appeal.

Mr. Norton also stated that the version of the facts as set forth by Willie Robinson is different from the statement of facts as presented by the State's Attorney of Cook County, Illinois or as presented at trial based upon the written opinion of the First District Appellate Court of Illinois. Mr. Robinson does not deny the incident but stated that he had limited involvement in the actual crime. Mr. Robinson admits that he was in possession of a loaded handgun, but stated that he did not get out of the vehicle until he heard several shots being fired up by the Furman vehicle where Larry Hamilton was standing by the front driver side door of the Furman vehicle. At this point, Willie Robinson admits that he did exit the vehicle and fired one shot toward the Furman vehicle. Mr. Robinson denies that he struck Claudia Furman in the head with his pistol or any other weapon.

When Mr. Norton interviewed Mr. Robinson, he noted that the inmate was pleasant, polite, courteous and attentive during the interview. Mr. Norton noted that Mr. Robinson was quite remorseful that the incident took place and with regard to the death of Mr. Furman and as to the injuries sustained by Mrs. Furman, but reiterated that his actual involvement in the crime itself was quite limited and minimal.

Upon the review of the parole assessment as completed by the Illinois Department of Corrections Mr. Norton noted that the institutional adjustment of Mr. Robinson has been marginal as he had received approximately 22 major and 60 minor IDR tickets through 2003. Mr. Norton recognized that Mr. Robinson has shown improvement in recent years with no reported IDR tickets since August 19, 2003.

When asked about his family, Mr. Robinson reported that he is divorced and that his closest living relative is his son, Willie Robinson, Jr., who resides in Chicago Heights, Illinois. Mr. Robinson further reported that his current job assignment at the Menard Correctional Center is in the clothing house as a tailor. Mr. Robinson also reported that he was in good physical and mental health. Mr. Robinson further advised that if granted parole he would reside with his sister, Tanya Robinson, in Leland, Mississippi. Stanley Robinson, a brother of Willie Robinson, and Dorothy Haggard, a sister of Willie Robinson, were present on the behalf of Mr. Robinson at the parole interview.

The Board noted that Mr. Robinson does have a notable institutional adjustment. However, Mr. Shelton brought up that he is troubled by the fact that Mr. Robinson refuses to accept his role in the murder of Mr. Furman. He stated that until he is able to face the truth about what happened, he is not comfortable with granting him parole. Mr. Monreal agreed. He stated that this attack was senseless, brutal, and unprovoked.

Motion to Deny Parole. (Norton- Shelton). Motion carries 12-0.

Motion for a 2 year set. (Norton-Blackman Donovan). Motion carries 12-0.

“The Board makes a specific finding that the release of victim protest letters could subject a person to actual risk of physical harm.”

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**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET- OPEN SESSION  
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Inmate Name: **Joseph Willhite** IDOC Number & Institution: **L11790**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open En Banc session at 319 E. Madison Street, Springfield, IL, on February 26, at the 8:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Inmate Joseph Willhite, IDOC # L11790.

Members present were: Chairman A. Monreal, A. Blackman-Donovan, E. Bowers, E. Crigler, S. Diaz, E. Gregg, C. Findley, V. Harris, T. Johnson, W. Norton, J. Parrack, D. Shelton

Other(s) present: Gabriela Chavez Barrientos, Recording Secretary

Summary of discussion for parole consideration: Member Mr. Johnson presented a summary of the parole interview and a review of all file materials.

Mr. Johnson shared that Joe Willhite was interviewed for parole consideration on January 7, 2015 at the Dixon Correctional Facility. During the interview, Mr. Willhite and Mr. Johnson discussed the inmate's institutional adjustment, nature of the offense, and parole plans. Also present at the institutional hearing were Reginald Guy II, Christian Plummer, and Alan Peters all from Northwestern University. All the visitors spoke in support of Mr. Willhite's parole.

Mr. Johnson stated that Inmate Willhite is now 80 years old and is serving a sentence of 100-200 years each on two counts of murder said sentences running concurrently. Mr. Willhite's victims were two women, Vernita Johnson and Robin McMahan, who were brutally stabbed to death by Mr. Willhite in the presence of Venita Johnson's four year old son on July 1, 1977. Mr. Johnson also stated that Mr. Willhite had a previous conviction of manslaughter in 1968 for which he served 21 months of a sentence of 2-12 years.

With regards to his institutional adjustment, Mr. Johnson shared that Inmate Willhite continues to maintain a very good disciplinary record at Dixon since his arriving there in 1987. He noted that he has had numerous jobs in prison doing good quality work on all of them. He has received his GED, Associates Degree in Auto Technology, and is very close to finishing an Associates degree in Education. Willhite maintains contact and support from family members who visit him periodically. He has submitted an application to St. Leonards House, as a transition in his parole where he to be paroled and would have support of his family.

Mr. Johnson recognizes that Mr. Willhite takes responsibility for his crimes and is very remorseful concerning the facts of the case. Mrs. Crigler stated that he is a very different person than the one he was when entering prison. Other members agreed. Mr. Findley stated that Mr. Willhite should be commended for his hard work and institutional adjustment.

However, other members of the Board, including Chairman Monreal, stated that the brutal nature of the crime makes the possibility of parole not possible for him. Mr. Diaz also stated that to parole Mr. Willhite would deprecate the seriousness of the offence and bring disrespect for the law.

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Motion to Grant Parole (Mr. Johnson- Mr. Findley). Motion Does not Carry 4-8. Members voting against parole were Ms. Blackman-Donovan, Mr. Bowers, Mr. Diaz, Mr. Gregg, Mr. Monreal, Mr. Norton, Mrs. Parrack, and Mr. Shelton.

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Inmate Name: **Earl Jones** IDOC Number & Institution: **C91504**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open En Banc session at 319 E. Madison Street, Springfield, IL, on February 26, at the 8:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Inmate Earl Jones, IDOC#91504.

Members present were: Chairman A. Monreal, A. Blackman-Donovan, E. Bowers, E. Crigler, S. Diaz, E. Gregg, C. Findley, V. Harris, T. Johnson, W. Norton, J. Parrack, D. Shelton

Other(s) present: Gabriela Chavez Barrientos, Recording Secretary.

Summary of discussion for parole consideration: Member Crigler presented a summary of the parole interview and a review of all file materials.

Ms. Crigler stated that she interviewed inmate Earl Jones, C91504, at the Dixon Correctional Center on January 7, 2015. Also present at the interview were his niece, Vivian Wallace, his sister, Vida Wallace, and his brother, Ivan Wallace.

Mrs. Crigler's interview included a complete review of Mr. Jones' institutional history, offender overview, inmate testimony, review of the case facts, parole plans and a discussion with Mr. Jones related to his remorse and issues of accountability.

Mrs. Crigler shared that Inmate Jones was found guilty of two counts of murder in 1979 and sentenced to 50-100 years imprisonment on each count for a crime committed in July of 1976. The sentences are to be served concurrent. He is currently unassigned due to medical reasons.

The facts of the case indicate that Mr. Jones used a shotgun to blow off the heads of his wife and her two-year old daughter. His wife's adultery was stated as the motive. Mr. Jones also stated he was angry and sad. Ms. Crigler shared that Mr. Jones has a lengthy history of violent acts including assault with intent to kill, attempted murder, obstructing police and theft. Mr. Jones was adjudged to be mentally incapable of standing trial for most of these charges. Ms. Crigler also shared that Mr. Jones has had multiple mental health placements and is currently taking some medication for both his heart and his mental health diagnosis.

Mrs. Crigler noted that Mr. Jones' institutional adjustment is good, with one major IDR for Trading and Trafficking since his last parole board hearing in 2012. Mr. Jones shared that this IDR was given to him because someone helped him carry his groceries from the commissary. This resulted in 15 days commissary restriction.

Chairman Monreal indicated the Board needs to have an up to date psychological report done on Inmate Jones before he is released and wrote recommendation to have him civilly committed. Mrs. Crigler indicated that if paroled, Mr. Jones plans to live with his sister Vida Wallace who has polio and is not capable of taking care of him.

Member Crigler indicated that to parole Inmate Jones at this time would deprecate the seriousness of the offense and promote disrespect for the law.

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Motion to deny. (EC – DS). Motion carries 12-0.

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Inmate Name: **Franklin Johnson** IDOC Number & Institution: **C10644**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open En Banc session at 319 E. Madison Street, Springfield, IL, on February 26, at the 8:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Inmate Franklin Johnson, IDOC # C10644.

Members present were: Chairman A. Monreal, A. Blackman-Donovan, E. Bowers, E. Crigler, S. Diaz, E. Gregg, C. Findley, V. Harris, T. Johnson, W. Norton, J. Parrack, D. Shelton

Other(s) present: Gabriela Chavez Barrientos, Recording Secretary.

Summary of discussion for parole consideration: Member Mr. Johnson presented a summary of the parole interview and a review of all file materials.

Mr. Johnson stated that Inmate Franklin Johnson refused to be interviewed for parole consideration on January 7, 2015 at the Dixon Correctional Facility. Factors for consideration of parole include, but are not limited to, the inmate's institutional adjustment, nature of the offense and parole plans.

Mr. Johnson shared that Inmate Johnson is currently 66 years old, having served 47 years for the murder and aggravated kidnapping of Beatrice Smith in 1968 for which he received a 50-75 year sentence. He subsequently was convicted of aggravated kidnapping for an escape he attempted from custody in 1968 for which he received a 2-20 year sentence to run consecutively for an aggregated sentence of 52-75 years. His projected discharge date is in 2021.

Mr. Johnson also shared that per the offender overview, Inmate Johnson still receives periodic visits from family. He has no parole plans and resides in the psychiatric unit where he is under the care of the Therapeutic Services Department. The file reveals he has previously been diagnosed as a chronic paranoid schizophrenic and will need on-going mental health assistance.

Due to the fact that he refuses to participate in parole interviews and has no parole plans as well as the nature of the offenses, Mr. Johnson believes that to parole Inmate Johnson at this time would deprecate the seriousness of the offense and bring disrespect for the law.

Motion to Deny Parole. (Johnson-Gregg). Motion Carries 12-0.

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Inmate Name: **Danny Lillard** IDOC Number & Institution: **C71613**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open En Banc session at 319 E. Madison Street, Springfield, IL, on February 26, at the 8:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Inmate Danny Lillard, IDOC # C71613.

Members present were: Chairman A. Monreal, A. Blackman-Donovan, E. Bowers, E. Crigler, S. Diaz, E. Gregg, C. Findley, V. Harris, T. Johnson, W. Norton, J. Parrack, D. Shelton

Other(s) present: Gabriela Chavez Barrientos, Recording Secretary.

Summary of discussion for parole consideration: Member Shelton presented a summary of the parole interview and a review of all file materials.

Mr. Shelton shared that Inmate Danny Lillard was interviewed for parole consideration at the Illinois River Correctional Center on January 7, 2015. The circumstances of Inmate Lillard's crime, his institutional adjustment and his parole plans were discussed.

Inmate Lillard received a penitentiary sentence of 100-150 years for the murder of 54 year old Mary Huffman, as well as a 10-30 year sentence for robbery. Mr. Shelton noted that Inmate Lillard does not dispute that he, after arming himself with a tire iron retrieved from his residence, entered a nearby gift shop being operated by Mrs. Huffman in Danville, Illinois, in order to commit a robbery. Mr. Lillard does not dispute that after demanding and receiving cash from Mrs. Huffman, he did beat her repeatedly with said tire iron without provocation, breaking both of her arms, causing profound skull damage, and resulting in her death at the scene. Mr. Lillard does not dispute that he then left the scene with a little more than \$100 and a radio, and that he committed these acts alone and of his own volition.

It was noted that Mr. Lillard was on probation for burglary at the time of the aforementioned crimes and he has always admitted to various forms of drug abuse.

The Board is aware of ongoing strong family support over the years from Mr. Lillard's family, and notes what has been mostly acceptable institutional adjustment. The Board is also aware of numerous protests from community members over the years to the possible release of Mr. Lillard.

Motion for Executive Session. DS – ADM. Leave.

Motion to return to Open Session. DS – ADM. Leave

Member Shelton stated that Inmate Lillard expresses no remorse or explanation for his crimes. Therefore, to grant parole at this time would deprecate the seriousness of the crime and promote disrespect for the law.

Motion to deny. DS – EG. Motion carries 12 – 0.

Motion for a three year set. Motion carries 8 – 4. Voting in favor of the motion were Members Blackman-Donovan, Bowers Diaz, Gregg, Johnson, Norton, Shelton and Chairman Monreal. Members Crigler, Findley, Harris and Parrack dissented.

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**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET- OPEN SESSION  
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Inmate Name: **John Tiller** IDOC Number & Institution: **C56160**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open En Banc session at 319 E. Madison Street, Springfield, IL, on February 26, at the 8:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for John Tiller, IDOC # C56160

Members present were: Chairman A. Monreal, A. Blackman-Donovan, E. Bowers, E. Crigler, S. Diaz, E. Gregg, C. Findley, V. Harris, T. Johnson, W. Norton, J. Parrack, D. Shelton

Other(s) present: Gabriela Chavez Barrientos, Recording Secretary.

Summary of discussion for parole consideration: Member Norton presented a summary of the parole interview and a review of all file materials.

Mr. Norton shared that a parole assessment interview was conducted with John Lee Tiller on January 8, 2015. Mr. Tiller was born on My 10, 1943, is currently seventy-one years of age, and was a resident of Centralia Correctional Center on the date of the interview. Also present at the interview on the behalf of Mr. Tiller was Mr. Ronald Luecking, a minister of the Congregation of Jehovah Witness Prison Ministry Program. According to the file, Mr. Tiller is serving a sentence of 100-200 years for the offense of Murder in St. Clair County.

The file and record indicate that on or about May 5, 1975 at approximately 7:30 a.m. police responded to a domestic disturbance at the John De Shields Housing Project in East St. Louis, Illinois. Police reports indicate women and children were present in the area. Police saw a subject in an upstairs window armed with a rifle. A gun battle then took place between Mr. Tiller and several police officers who were on the scene. During this encounter, Mr. Tiller fired a shot that went through the uniform cap of Police Officer Wren who by some miracle was not injured by the bullet. However, another shot fired by Mr. Tiller struck police officer Manuel Farmer III in the left chest which punctured the pulmonary artery as he was standing at the rear of a vehicle attempting to get some equipment. Police officer Manuel Farmer III was pronounced dead upon his arrival at the hospital. After certain negotiations, John L. Tiller surrendered his weapon and was taken into custody without any injury to Mr. Tiller. It was determined through testing that the rifle used by Mr. Tiller was the same weapon that fired the fatal shot that resulted in the death of Police Officer Manual Farmer, III.

Mr. Norton noted that Mr. Tiller did not dispute the basic facts which led to his conviction. He did add that before any shots were fired that police did knock on his apartment door but that he did not respond. He also admitted that he probably fired at least ten rounds from his rifle out of the apartment window and admitted that he probably fired the shot that killed Police Officer Manuel Farmer, III. His only justification was that he had been drinking at a tavern the night before, that he had an argument with his wife, and that he was scared.

Mr. Tiller was found guilty of the offense of Murder following a jury trial and was admitted to the Illinois Department of Corrections on December 5, 1975. Mr. Norton noted that Mr. Tiller was pleasant, polite, courteous and attentive during the interview. Mr. Tiller also expressed sincere remorse for the entire incident and especially for the death of Police Officer Manuel Farmer, III.

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Member Norton states that the parole assessment as completed by the Illinois Department of Corrections reports that Mr. Tiller does not have any other prior criminal history and that Mr. Tiller is serving his first and only adult incarceration. Mr. Tiller has received one major and approximately twenty minor IDR tickets since June 1, 2000, but it is important to note that Mr. Tiller has not received any IDR tickets since 2007. Mr. Tiller received his GED certificate in 1978 and has also earned an EMT certificate. Mr. Tiller has previously held several work assignments but is currently unassigned. Mr. Tiller has been an active participant with regard to Jehovah Witness Bible Study for more than twenty years.

Mr. Tiller reported that he was born in Mississippi, but is a lifelong resident of East St. Louis, Illinois. Mr. Tiller further reported that his parents are deceased and that he does not have any living brothers or sisters. Mr. Tiller advised that his wife, Mary Tiller, passed away in 2008. Mr. Tiller has four living children, being Earl Tiller who resides in Minnesota, John Tiller who resides in St. Louis, Missouri, Michael Tiller who resides in O'Fallon, Illinois and Anobia Sheard who resides in East St. Louis, Illinois. Mr. Tiller also advised that he is in good physical and mental health with the exception of Type 2 Diabetes and that he is a U.S. Army Veteran having received an Honorable Discharge after serving as an infantry medic from 1962-1965. Mr. Tiller stated that if granted parole he would plan to reside with his son, Michael Tiller, or with his daughter, Anobia Sheard.

Mr. Norton, while noting Mr. Tiller's remarkable institutional adjustment, remains concerned about the serious nature of this crime and offense. Several other members of the Board also believe that a release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of this offense and crime and promote a lack of respect for the law.

Motion to Deny Parole (Norton-Bowers). Motion Carries 8-3-1. Ms. Harris Abstains. Members voting in favor of the motion were Ms. Blackman-Donovan, Mr. Bowers, Mr. Diaz, Mr. Gregg, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Norton, Ms. Parrack, Mr. Shelton, and Chairman Monreal.

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