



STATE OF ILLINOIS
 JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD

Kenneth Tupy, Board Member

**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET
 OPEN SESSION— March 28, 2024**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on March 28, 2024, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following individuals in custody:

C83534	Brownell, Curtis
R15339	Paige, Melvin (Youthful Parole)

The meeting was called to order by Kenneth Tupy, Board Member.

Roll call was taken by Recording Secretary Alexandria Bryan.

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Mr. Jared Bohland	X	
Mr. Matthew Coates	X	
Mr. William Delgado	X	
Ms. Julie Globokar	X	
Ms. Darryldean Goff	X	
Mr. Jeffrey Grubbs	X	
Mr. Rodger Heaton	X	
Ms. Robin Shoffner	X	
Ms. Carmen Terrones	X	
Ms. Krystal Tison	X	
Mr. Kenneth Tupy	X	

11 Members Present

0 Member Absent

The Board heard the case of Curtis Brownell C83534, and Melvin Paige R15339.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL for 2/29/24: WDELGADO - DGOFF

Open Session: MCOATES - RHEATON

Meeting was adjourned by: WDELGADO - MCOATES

Leave.



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION March 28, 2024

Individual in Custody's Name: Melvin Paige

IDOC Number: R15339

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on March 28, 2024, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Melvin Paige, R15339.

Members present were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Delgado, Ms. Globokar, Ms. Goff, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Terrones, Ms. Tison, Ms. Shoffner, and Mr. Tupy, Acting Chair.

Recording Secretary: Alexandria Bryan.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

The basis for the Board's decision, at this time, is as follows:

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Mr. Melvin Paige, age 40, was interviewed by Ms. Darryldean Goff, and Mr. Donald Shelton on Tuesday February 27, 2024, live via WebEx virtual platform from Pinckneyville Correctional Center at 9:00 am, with the participation of his counsel, Ms. Lia Raves. Also in attendance observing were Ms. Rachel Lindner, legal counsel for Mr. Paige, IPP Legal team members Ms. Gin Francesoni and Mr. Brian Johnson, and Mitigating Specialist Ms. Nicole Courtier. Others present on his behalf in a separate virtual WebEx were his father, Mr. Nemroy Murry Sr, his brother, Mr. Nemroy Murry Jr, his sister, Ms. Kanesha Jackson, and his mother, Ms. Kimberly Paige.

On March 15, 2024, Mr. Donald Shelton and Ms. Goff visited Pinckneyville Correctional Center to review Mr. Paige's master file. On Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Ms. Goff conducted a follow-up interview with Mr. Paige and his attorneys, Ms. Lia Raves & Ms. Rachael Lindner to ask him additional and follow-up questions to the interview on Tuesday, February 27, 2024.

Throughout both interviews, Mr. Paige was attentive, articulate, polite, respectful, and responsive. He responded well to questions and was open with his responses. He was invested in the process and willing to answer questions, responding to the best of his knowledge and ability.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office provided this statement of facts.

"On August 25, 1999, the decomposing body of the victim (Emil Mennes) was found in his apartment. The elderly victim had been stabbed numerous times and was found in a chair with a blue blanket covering the body. The Defendant lived down the hall from the victim. On September 10, 1999, he turned himself in to the police and confessed to killing the victim because the victim had grinned at



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the Defendant in a manner the Defendant found to be insulting. The Defendant, Mr. Paige, got a knife from his apartment, entered the victim's apartment, and approached the victim from behind as he was watching T.V. The Defendant stabbed the victim repeatedly and then threw the blue blanket over the victim. He took a rosary with a silver cross from the victim's apartment and left. The Defendant then threw away his shirt, but the police recovered the metal from the rosary in the Defendant's shoes and pants via a consent to search. Police also recovered the murder weapon, which turned out to be a letter opener and not a knife. On August 20, 1999, in Palatine, Cook County, the Defendant resided in the same building as the victim. Sometime in September 1999, the Defendant entered the Palatine Police Department and reported to the police he had killed the victim in August of 1999. The Defendant was 16 years old at the time. The Defendant had numerous arrests as a juvenile. The victim was 78 years old at the time and was a stroke victim. The Defendant stabbed the victim numerous times in the chest and abdomen areas while the victim was asleep in his chair."

During the trial, Mr. Mennes's son, Mr. Robert Mennes, testified that his father had suffered a stroke and sustained partial paralysis on the left side of his body.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Melvin Paige had a curfew violation and received probation for 14 months. No other criminal before this offense.

Mr. Melvin Paige was charged with Murder/Intent to Kill/injure and received 40 years, and Home Invasion/Cause Injury and received 25 years.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Since October 2002, Mr. Paige has received 17 tickets, four minor and thirteen major. His last ticket was July 8, 2020. The previous three tickets he received in 2020 were Failure to Report and Refusing to Go to Work. Before 2020, his last ticket was in 2017. Mr. Paige had three tickets for Gang or Unauthorized Organization Activity related to the Latin Kings and Security Threat Group (STG).

In October 2002, he was approved for Protective Custody at Stateville due to being threatened by Latin Kings for non-gang activity. On October 20, 2002, he was signed out of protective custody because he wanted out. He thought it would keep him out of a maximum facility. On December 4, 2002, in Stateville, protective custody was recommended by Correctional Officer Slaughter, Intel Coordinator.

He reported he was a retired Latin King member. As a result, the Latin Kings are after him. He stated that "Mob laws do not allow him to retire from the gang." During the Intel interview he stated that he was actively affiliated with the Latin Kings from the age of 11 until 2001.

Multiple times during his incarceration, he has requested Protective Custody. The most recent was in October 2023. Mr. Paige states he has used his institutional time in the Illinois Department of Corrections to educate himself. He read many different books to stay informed on finances and self-improvement. Recently he completed and received a certificate on March 20, 2024, for Drug



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Awareness, and Mindfulness Skills on March 21, 2024. In December 2023, he completed Beyond Criminal Thinking, Impulse Control, Taking Responsibility, and Anger Management. In 2022, he received his certificate of High School Equivalency. As a youthful offender, he does not qualify for other Illinois Department of Corrections programs. He took computer skills, participated in Bible Study, Impact of Crime on Victim at Menard Correctional Center in 2015, and entered a writing contest.

During our interview on March 27, I asked Mr. Paige what skills he had learned in Anger Management and if he could provide an example of an incident that called on those skills. He offered an example of an incident in the past few weeks. He was entering to shower, and another inmate brushed up against him. They exchanged a few words, and then, when it started to heat up, the other man said, "Do you want to fight?" At that point, Mr. Paige said, he told him, "No, you go take your shower, and I'll come back." He did not want to lose his freedom and what he gained over a shower.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

In his petition, Mr. Paige wrote "Prior to my arrest on September 10, 1999, I went on a double date with my girlfriend to the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. Her and I got into a heated argument, that led her to spitting on me. I then ask the driver to drop me off, somewhere near home. And the driver agreed. After being dropped off and moments later before going home, I found a person to give me some drugs to help after my mental and emotional hurt. While entering my grandmother's building residence, I passed through the hallway a neighbor named Emil Mennes, whom I thought was overly staring at me. Moments later, he became a victim of my earlier, overwhelming bottled up hurt. Days later, I voluntarily went to the police station. I confess to the damage and murder of Emil Mennes. I was 16 years of age and arrested early morning of September 10, 1999."

In his petition, he did not describe the murder as he did in his statement(s) to the police, which was additionally stated in his 2022 appeal. In our interview on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, I asked Mr. Paige to elaborated on his statement. He stated, "I stabbed Mr. Mennes multiple times and threw a cover over his body." He did not recall many of the rest of the details of the night or his confession, but he knew he murdered Mr. Mennes and takes complete responsibility for his actions and behavior, and the harm he caused.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Paige maintains a good relationship with his family. Throughout his incarceration, his family has visited, and he talks with them frequently, particularly his sister and mother. He has been in correspondence with his younger brother, Mr. Nemroy Murry, Jr., and they have created a positive bond over the past few years. His brother was 9 when he went to prison. His brother has vowed to maintain this relationship and help his brother in his transition home, including mentoring and helping him work in the family business. Mr. Paige's entry plan requires him to return to live with and work with his father. While he will not live with his mother, she has offered her support and belief in her son's rehabilitation and plans to provide her support financially and otherwise.

He plans to work with his father and brother, who have committed to helping him with transportation to all his appointments and programs.



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The following community organizations have committed and to assisting with his reintegration and reentry into the community: NAMI, Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation, Safer Foundation, Cara, and IPP. Each organization sent in letters that are attached to his petition. If paroled, he will go to the reentry and transition program in Peoria, Illinois, and then transition home to his father's house. He will then connect with the other community reentry organizations.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

The Cook County State's Attorney Objects. Referring to the Statement of Facts and because of the viciousness of this attack and the Defendant's statement that he had stabbed the victim because he believed he had given the Defendant a "dirty look," the People do not recommend early release."

ENBANC HISTORY

This is Mr. Paige's first time at En Banc.

Open Executive Session: DGOFF - WDELGADO

Close Executive Session: KTUPY - WDELGADO

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Ms. Lia Raves, Mr. Melvin Paige's attorney, stated that taking accountability for his actions that night is something that he never denied. He turned himself into the police at 16 years old. She stated that the remorse that Mr. Paige feels runs deep still today, his actions have helped him become the changed man he is today. Throughout his incarceration he has committed himself to sobriety. She stated that he was under an extreme state of intoxication at 16 years old. He does not have a violent history. There is no juvenile history, and there are no tickets for violence while in Illinois Department of Corrections. She stated that he prioritizes his family and cherishes them. He meditates and has affirmations. He received his GED in the 2000's but it is not accepted everywhere, so he has gone back to get his GED again to be prepared. He maintains positivity while incarcerated. He has achieved a level of self-awareness. He knows how to seek mental health counseling when he needs help. She stated that Mr. Paige is a planner and go getter. He had a list of ideas of his reentry plan.

Mr. Melvin Paige addressed the board about his remorse for this crime. He stated that for years he has been disgusted with his actions, and he wishes he could take back that night. He stated that since that event happened, he has become more of a cautious person, and is aware of his actions.

Mr. Nemray Murray, Mr. Melvin Paige's father, stated that he runs a small business in construction. He stated that he installs hot water tanks, decks, and tubs. He stated that if his son is released, he will train him to work with him. He stated that he needs a minute to process the thoughts of this case and is overwhelmed. He stated that he runs and owns Final Touch. He stated that a father plays a huge role,



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but he did not have that opportunity when Melvin was younger.

Ms. Lia Raves stated that Mr. Paige was with his mother most of his life. He has just rekindled and created a relationship with his father and siblings the past few years. He also has re-entry facilities ready to help him.

Ms. Shoffner questioned Mr. Paige about his three tickets in 2020 relating to his work. She questioned how he came through that and how he was able to be without tickets after that.

Mr. Melvin Paige stated that he was overwhelmed with the staff and COVID. He stated that he was overwhelmed with the amount of work he had with the COVID pandemic.

Ms. Terrones questioned the limited programming that he was allowed while in IDOC. She also stated that he had to take the time and find available programming for himself.

Ms. Goff stated that now that he is in Pinckneyville Correctional Center, he has access to those programs that he didn't before.

Ms. Terrones questioned Mr. Nemray Murray, Mr. Melvin Paige's father, about his feelings about Mr. Paige's case and the details. She questioned if he is still wanting to support him after hearing those details.

Mr. Nemray Murray stated that he didn't socialize with his mother, and he was in the dark about those actual actions. He stated that GOD has his own business and that he is now in his life, and he can help him to move on. He is still supporting him.

Mr. Delgado questioned Mr. Nemray Murray about when they mended their relationship.

Mr. Nemray Murray stated that he visited Mr. Paige while he was in juvenile custody when this first happened. They lost connection and about 3 years ago they started contacting one another again.

Ms. Lia Raves stated that Mr. Paige has two options to live upon re-entry. His father and Peoria Pathways have also made a bed available to him. Peoria Pathways have a lot of programs that range from 3-18 months. There are job readiness programs.

Mr. Heaton questioned Mr. Paige's feelings on going into his father's line of work and the long hours that he could potentially have to work. He questioned Mr. Paige about his triggers in stressful situations as well as his feelings about his childhood with his mother.

Mr. Paige stated that he looks at all trades as an opportunity to learn a new life skill. He stated that he is very excited to work next to his father and brother. He stated that he recalls he has a PTSD diagnosis but doesn't remember why. He stated that he can acknowledge when his mood changes. He stated that he immediately gets himself into therapy. He stated that this mother was very young when she had him, and that they didn't understand one another because they were both growing up. He stated that now that she is older, she has forgiven herself, and he had forgiven her as well.



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Mr. Tupy stated that there are two ways to leave a gang. He questioned if Mr. Paige officially renounced from the gang.

Mr. Melvin Paige stated that he did not officially renounce because it was unsafe. He stated that he just told them he was out, and they respected that.

Mr. Tupy stated that he was resentenced in June 2022 the original sentence was 50 years, at the resentencing it was changed to 40 years. He questioned if the attorneys were a part of the resentencing.

Ms. Lia Raves stated that they were not his attorney for the resentencing. She also stated that he was re-evaluated for PTSD. He has PTSD from a trauma diagnosis and that is how they got him in therapy groups.

End of discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to grant parole (DGOFF - RSHOFFNER). Motion failed with a 5-6 vote. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Coates, Mr. Delgado, Ms. Goff, Ms. Shoffner, and Ms. Terrones. Mr. Bohland, Ms. Globokar, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Tison, and Mr. Tupy dissented.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Paige's case, the Board voted to deny parole. The Board feels that parole release at this time would not be in the interest of public safety, as there is a substantial risk that Mr. Paige's parole release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of the offenses and promote a lack of respect for the law.

"The Board makes a specific finding that the release of victim protest letters could subject a person to actual risk of physical harm. The Board further notes that, pursuant to Illinois law, victim statements are confidential and privileged."

EN BANC MINUTE SHEET OPEN SESSION March 28, 2024

Individual in Custody's Name: Curtis Brownell IDOC Number: C83534

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on March 28, 2024, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Curtis Brownell, C83534.

Members present were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Delgado, Ms. Globokar, Ms. Goff, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Terrones, Ms. Tison, Ms. Shoffner, and Mr. Tupy, Acting Chair.



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Recording Secretary: Alexandria Bryan.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

The basis for the Board's decision, at this time, is as follows:

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

On February 13, 2024, Mr. Curtis Brownell was interviewed by Board Member, Ms. Krystal Tison, at Dixon Correctional Center via Webex. Mr. Brownell's interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. His attorneys, Ms. Kylie Wood, Ms. Annie Mose and Ms. Ann McDonald were present for the interview. Former Prisoner Review Board Chairman Mr. Donald Shelton observed part of the interview.

Mr. Brownell is a 69-year-old male who has been in custody continuously since 1978, having spent the last 46 years behind bars. He has been in Dixon Correctional Center since October 12, 2011. He was 22 and 23 years old at the time of the offenses.

During the interview, Mr. Brownell was polite, calm and he communicated clearly. He appeared prepared for the interview.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On September 27, 1977, 17-year-old Ms. Louise Betts was hitchhiking, and Mr. Curtis Brownell picked her up, kidnapped, raped, and strangled her. Her body was discarded in a cornfield and was found months later, on March 30, 1978.

In his written confession it was revealed that he held a jack knife to the victim's throat while he drove to a road with cornfields on either side. He told her to get out and undress and he engaged in sexual intercourse with her. He then attempted to strangle her, but she was able to get up and run. He caught her, strangled her again, then stood on her stomach and neck. He dragged her further into the cornfield and left her to die.

On January 31, 1978, while Ms. Louise Betts was still missing, he abducted Ms. Kathy Brickey from a laundromat in Rockford. She was seven months pregnant. He hit her on the head, forced her to the ground, took her purse, pulled her up, put a gun to her side and forced her to his car. He drove her to an area where he raped, and pistol whipped her. She pretended she was unconscious, and he kicked her. He then drove over her with his car. She survived as did her baby.

He became a suspect when he was identified as the man stalking another young woman the next day. He was placed in a line-up, identified, and confessed.

He admitted that he has a history of deviant sexual behavior, including making obscene phone calls, beginning at age 16 or 17.



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Mr. Brownell admitted going out in his car to pick up hitchhikers with fantasies of raping them. He described his first acts involving victims who were in the car with him as having occurred while he was in the Air Force. In one instance, he picked up a female hitchhiker and while there was no rape, he abused her by displaying a gun and inserting his finger in her vagina. In a written statement he described an evening when he picked up a girl who was hitchhiking and put a knife to her throat. He explained she opened the moving car's door, and he pushed her as she jumped out.

Mr. Brownell was married and had two children, ages 18 months and 3 ½ at the time of the Ms. Louise Betts murder. Mr. Brownell related an incident with his three-year-old daughter. At the time, he had the practice of masturbating while making obscene calls. He couldn't get anyone on the phone, so he woke up his daughter, undressed her, and masturbated while looking at her.

Mr. Brownell is the youngest of four children. From age 8 to 10 he was repeatedly bullied by a family member resulting in homosexual activity. His father drank heavily and attempted suicide in 1970. That was also the year when his parents divorced. He quit high school and joined the Air Force. He received an honorable discharge. He is divorced with two adult children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Prior to the crimes for which he now serves, Mr. Brownell had a disorderly conduct conviction in 1974. He said he stopped to offer females rides to work and this time it was a female undercover police officer.

In 1977 he was convicted for making obscene phone calls.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Brownell reports that he has had three tickets since he's been incarcerated. Only two are identified in his records. One was a major ticket for Possession of Contraband and Theft in 2004 which involved a candy bar. The other ticket was for Unauthorized Movement in 2011 which Mr. Brownell said occurred when he returned to Dixon Correctional Center from Graham Correctional Center. He indicated that the process had changed while he was gone, and he was unaware of new rules. He noted another older ticket was in 1995 for disobeying a direct order.

He returned to Dixon Correctional Center from attending sex offender treatment at Graham Correctional Center in 2011 and had approximately one year of treatment at Dixon. Since then, Dixon has not offered sex offender treatment. He does not receive any mental health services. He completed a module concerning anxiety and one concerning anger. He admitted a problem with alcohol and said he would drink before going out to pick up his victims.

Mr. Brownell is assigned as a Dietary Specialist since November 2021 and prior to that as janitor.



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Mr. Brownell received his Associate of Arts degree from Belleville College in 1990, associate in applied science from Carl Sandburg in 1989, Bachelor of General Studies from Roosevelt University in 1992, a certificate in Machine Drafting from Carl Sandburg College in 1989, a certificate in computer aided drafting from Carl Sandberg College in the early 1990s, a certificate in Food Service from Lake Land College in 2005, and certificate in Custodial Maintenance from Lake Land College in 2008.

He also completed a one-day Lifestyle Redirection and attended a two-day computer class, Re-Entry Summits.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. Brownell began by expressing his apology and sorrow for what he did. He acknowledged the crimes to Ms. Louise Betts and Ms. Kathy Brickey caused tremendous pain, grief, sadness and left a deep void. He said he was truly sorry. He said he has learned how to control his compulsive behavior. He said he wanted to contact the victim, but his therapist suggested he not make contact and open old wounds. Instead, he wrote his thoughts and discussed them in his therapy group. This therapy helped him develop empathy for the victims and gave them a voice that helped him understand the pain and suffering he caused them.

He stated that while he is not offering this information as an excuse for his terrible behavior, there were things that influenced him. His older brother introduced him to masturbation and performed various sex acts on him between age eight and ten. He said he confronted his brother while incarcerated and said he felt free after their conversation about the homosexual activity abuse. Additionally, he was 15 years old when he found his father who had attempted suicide.

Mr. Brownell attended the Sex Offender Program at Graham for 6 years and learned skills to deal with his fantasies. He explained that he did not understand cycles at the time he was committing offenses and he did not know how to stop. He said he did not plan to murder Ms. Louise Betts.

Mr. Brownell has identified actions he will take to ensure these crimes will not happen again. He plans to be involved in sex offender treatment for life, locate and become involved with church and a church family, become a member of a therapy group, continue with his weekly family contacts, be honest with his thoughts and feelings, and develop healthy hobbies, such as painting. He said he is eager to start over after his very terrible crimes and he is pleased that his family is supportive of him. He said that although nothing he faced compared to what the victims of his crimes faced, he has faced difficult situations and was able to implement the things he learned. There was an unprovoked attack on him by another inmate and he was beaten while working in the laundry room. He also explained that he had a difficult and controlling cell mate for 4-5 years. He said he learned how not to respond with anger. The difficult cell mate was almost blind, and Mr. Brownell assisted with his laundry and paperwork.

PAROLE PLANS

If granted parole, Mr. Brownell plans to live in Marion, Illinois at the Haven House, which is a home for veterans. The home provides support for re-entry including clothing, assistance in



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coordinating therapy, medical care, and they provide meals. They will also assist him in obtaining funds from the VA to cover his basic needs including the cost of his stay. They will assist in applying for a pension and will provide transportation to take him to sex offender treatment. The Illinois Prison Project also helps with post relief services. Two of his grandchildren live about 3 or 4 hours from Marion, Illinois and could visit him.

On February 7, 2024, Ms. Leslie Mayland, his sister, and Ms. Bethany Phillips, his granddaughter was interviewed via WebEx. Ms. Kylie Wood, and Ms. Annie Mose, were present. Mr. Brownell has emotional support from family members. Ms. Mayland and Ms. Phillips have weekly contact with him by phone and they report that other family also have telephone contact. Mr. Brownell's granddaughter said he cried when speaking of his offenses. She said he attends church regularly and has turned his life to God. She does not think he would be a risk to commit another crime. She said he is a good grandfather to her. She began having contact with him when she was 12 or 13 years of age. Ms. Leslie Mayland, his sister, said he had knee replacement but is doing well and can walk up to one mile. She said he is doing well and shows no mental health issues. She pointed out his educational achievements, his work assignment delivering breakfast trays and his attendance at chapel. She said he has become a kinder person over the years, and as an example, she said he gave a sweatshirt to an inmate who was cold.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

This is a highly publicized case, and the impact of these crimes still resonates with the community.

The Boone County and Winnebago County State's Attorneys have consistently opposed his release. Their most recent letters are dated February 1st and February 2nd, 2024, and the letter from the Boone County States's Attorney notes over 1,000 signatures on a petition opposing parole. There is also an online petition for the Illinois Prisoner Review Board to deny parole and not have another hearing for 5 years. It is signed by approximately 2600 people. In addition, many concerned citizens and family members of the victims have written letters objecting to parole.

In his letter, the former Boone County prosecutor who handled the original trial noted Mr. Brownell's complete lack of remorse.

At the sentencing hearing in Winnebago County for Ms. Kathy Brickey's case, the judge said, "The purpose of this sentence is to deprive you of the society of your fellow citizens during such a period of time that you may not return to society and commit upon it any further crimes."

ENBANC HISTORY

This is Mr. Brownell's seventeenth time up for parole. His last time before the Board was in May 2022. That year, he received 1 vote for parole. He has received several multiyear sets. In 2022, he received a 2-year set. In the past, he has received several 3-year sets.



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Open Executive Session: KTISON - MCOATES

Close Executive Session: WDELGADO - MCOATES

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Ms. Annie Mose, Mr. Curtis Brownell's attorney, stated that they have represented him since 2020. She stated that he has spent 46 years in prison, and he is remorseful. She stated that he fixed things with his family and has been accepted into a Veterans home in Southern Illinois. She stated that Mr. Brownell did not choose the right path in life. She stated that his family have turned in letters of support for him. His family acknowledges his growth. He will reside at Haven House in southern Illinois if released. He will be able to reside there indefinitely. She stated that he must use a wheelchair when his illnesses flair up. She stated that he has always worked in some compacity while in Illinois Department of Corrections, but he is currently not working due to his condition. She stated that he has taken full responsibility for his crimes. He is ready to be a productive member of society.

Mr. Heaton questioned the ongoing sex therapy at the Haven House. He questioned what the purpose of the ongoing therapy was for and if there were ongoing impulses that he would need that therapy for.

Ms. Annie Mose stated that Mr. Brownell wants to have the therapy as a security to work through life's difficulties as it comes. She stated that he does not have sexual impulse but is thinking ahead that he might need therapy.

Mr. Grubbs questioned if the Haven House has on site therapy, and stated he did not think they offered that. He also questioned if Mr. Brownell has a letter of acceptance to the Haven House.

Ms. Annie Mose and Ms. Kylie Wood stated that Haven house would help him seek the help outside of the Haven House. They stated that they have exchanged paperwork with the Haven House stating they would assist him.

Ms. Terrones questioned what specific family members were supporting him. She also questioned if the attorneys have communicated directly with those family members.

Ms. Annie Mose stated that Mr. Brownell has his granddaughter, two sisters, a brother and a grandson supporting him. She stated that they have spoken with his granddaughter and one sister. Each family member submitted a letter on behalf.

Ms. Tricia Smith, Boone County State's Attorney, stated that Mr. Brownell brutally murdered 16-year-old Ms. Betts. She gave details from the case. She stated that he admitted in court that he got on her back and strangled her from the back and stated that it took over 10 minutes for her to die because she was fighting back. She stated that once he discarded her, and her belongings he headed to the bar. She stated that a few months later he took his daughter back to that same corn field that he left Ms. Betts to die in and picked corn stalks with her. She stated that he admitted to picking up women and



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throwing them out of his car at high-rates of speed. She stated that he also admitted that he sexually abused his own daughter. She read note passages from his psychiatric evaluations. She stated that he maintained to fool people with his behavior. He was married with children and retired from the Air Force. She stated that within his statement to the Board he admitted to five victims. He was only charged for two victims. She stated that the Bett's family have done everything that they can to protest the release of Mr. Brownell. She stated that the community protested his release, there are over 1,000 signatures. She stated that he had an escape attempt in Boone County. He carved a weapon out of ping pong paddle, held it to a guard's neck and he made it to a graveyard before being caught. She stated that in the parole plan it states that he is being a part of a program but there is no accountability at the program, nor does it state if he can just walk away from that program at any time. She requested if the Board denies parole, that she is requesting a 5-year set because there will not be any changes in that time. She said that it was stated that he was a troubled young man in his petition, but he was not. She stated that he didn't want to send apology letters so that he did not open old wounds, but each hearing is opening an old wound. She stated that if he wanted to apologize, he would continue to stay in prison and stop having parole hearings.

Mr. Scott Robinson, Winnebago County Assistant State's Attorney, he stated that the people in Winnebago County object to Mr. Brownell's release. He stated that after Mr. Brownell abducted her, beat her, and raped her he forcefully ejected her from his vehicle. He also hit and kicked her knowing that she was 7 months pregnant. Then he intentionally put his car in reverse and ran her over with his vehicle. The only reason she did not die is because there was snow piled up on ground and it took the weight of the vehicle. She was able to get up and run away to a house to find help. He requested that everyone imagine the terror that these women felt in those moments. He stated that justice requires us to try. He stated that the only reason Mr. Brownell was caught was because he dropped a receipt at the scene of the crime and was out stalking another victim one to two days later. While giving his alibi Mr. Brownell stated that he was at Burger King and gave the details that matched the receipt at Ms. Brickey's crime scene. He stated that they believe he should spend the rest of his life in prison. He stated that these were not crimes that were provoked, or in the heat of the moment. He stated that these crimes were premeditated.

Ms. Nicole Bartell, Assistant Attorney General for the Sexually Violent Persons Bureau, stated that if Mr. Brownell is paroled today that the Attorney General's office is requesting that he have a 90 day stay for an evaluation.

Ms. Globokar stated that they are tasked with considering in addition to institutional history, deprecation of seriousness of offense and whether an individual will conform to the conditions of parole. She stated that she offered for the record and sake of deliberation that this was originally a death penalty case. He's served about the equivalent of 20-year statutory minimum and 25-year firearm enhancement that at one point had been in effect in the state of Illinois. She stated that we have an instance where the individual engaged in multiple acts reflective of a patent disregard for others, including the sexual assault and murder of one individual and then returning to the scene with his young daughter to gather corn stalks that he brought home as decoration; he described of that incident that after returning to the scene he "thought everything was okay," presumably from not seeing the body, and that he "went to work without any conscience," but it wasn't until he heard they found a body that he experienced "shock all over," and his "heart was beating real fast." She stated that they also heard



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today of the brutal assault and effort to kill another, the molestation of his own daughter, and countless other forms of indiscriminate violation, endangerment, and cruelty of others. He admitted at one point that, "On his night out, I like to go out and pick up a girl and rape her," He had put a knife to another girl's throat, and she opened the door, he sped up to about 60 mph and, "before I knew it she was out of the car." In 1978, he claimed he'd look out the jail window and fantasize about raping and probably killing the women; he knew this wasn't right, "but he found picking up women to be very exciting."

Ms. Goff stated that if he would've been successful with his crime in Winnebago County that he would've also killed an unborn baby.

End of discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (KTISON – JGRUBBS). Motion prevailed by a unanimous vote.

Motion for a 4-year set (KTISON – RSHOFFNER). Motion prevails by a 9-2 vote. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Delgado, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Shoffner, Ms. Terrones, Ms. Tison, and Mr. Tupy. Mr. Globokar and Ms. Goff dissented.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Brownell's case, the Board voted to deny parole. The Board feels that parole release at this time would not be in the interest of public safety, as there is a substantial risk that Mr. Brownell's parole release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of the offenses and promote a lack of respect for the law.

"The Board makes a specific finding that the release of victim protest letters could subject a person to actual risk of physical harm. The Board further notes that, pursuant to Illinois law, victim statements are confidential and privileged."