



STATE OF ILLINOIS
 JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD

***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION— July 25, 2024

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on July 25, 2024, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following individuals in custody:

R43830	Orejel, Cesar (Youthful Parole)
C10475	Larson, Raymond (Indeterminate)
C01793	Barksdale, James * (Indeterminate)

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 Members Absent

The Board heard the case of Cesar Orejel R43830, Raymond Larson C10475, and James Barksdale C01793.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL for 6/20/24: CONT TO discussion JGRUBBS - WDELGADO

Open Session: MCOATES - KTISON

Meeting was adjourned by: JBOHLAND - KTISON

Leave.



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET
OPEN SESSION July 25, 2024**

Individual in Custody's Name: Cesar Orejel

IDOC Number: R43830

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on July 25, 2024, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Cesar Orejel R43830.

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.

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. Cesar Orejel was interviewed on May 9, 2024, by Ms. Terrones, Board Member via Webex. He was accompanied by counsel Ms. Sheree Davis from Sandifer and Associates in Fairview Heights, Illinois. This was the Petitioner's first contact with Counsel, and Ms. Terrones provided several minutes for them to connect before proceeding with the interview. Counsel indicated she was notified this morning to step in for another colleague.

Mr. Orejel was prepared to communicate enthusiastically, presented with a clear mind, and demonstrated a positive attitude throughout the interview. He was well prepared to participate on his behalf. No apparent physical challenges were evident to the interviewer. He expressed himself appropriately. Mr. Orejel affirmed all the information in the petition was accurate.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On August 16, 2002, the victim, Mr. Cesar Bejar was with friends in the area of 48th and Winchester. The victim saw a girl walking down the street and approached her and started talking with her. The defendant along with two co-offenders approached the victim on the street as he was talking to the girl. The defendant started asking the victim why he was on the block and flashed a "2-6" gang sign. The defendant, Mr. Cesar Orejel, and the victim then exchanged more words, and a physical fight began between the victim and the defendant. The victim was not a gang member. During the fight a co-offender got a gun and started shooting at the victim and the victim's friends who were standing nearby. The fight broke up and the defendant then took the gun from his co-offender and chased the victim. The defendant shot at the victim several times as the victim was running away. One of the defendant's shots hit the victim in the eye, piercing his brain, and killing him instantly. Neither the victim nor any of his friends were armed. Even though the defendant denies any gang affiliation, he did have a three-point



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tattoo at the time of the murder, which represents the “2-6 Nation” and he as the instigator of this whole event because he approached the victim and flashed a “2-6” gang sign. Apparently, the defendant did not want someone he did not know to be in his gang’s territory.

This defendant was sixteen (16) years old at the time of this murder, and he had just finished juvenile probation.

The defendant fled to Texas after this murder, and when he returned, he was arrested pursuant to a warrant. While he was out on bond for this murder, he was arrested for domestic battery for hitting his girlfriend. He then violated an order of protection that his girlfriend received in court as a result of the domestic battery.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

On April 14, 2003, Mr. Cesar Orejel was arrested for murder. On April 17, 2003, the warrant was quashed for the Murder charge, and he was released on bail.

On October 5, 2004, he was arrested on a warrant for bond forfeiture.

On October 6, 2004, his domestic battery warrants were quashed.

On December 20, 2004, he was arrested for a violation of an order of protection, driver's license not on person, and defective side/rear windshield.

On April 29, 2005, the domestic battery charge was dismissed with leave to reinstate in Cook County.

On May 18, 2005, he was found guilty on case 2003CR107200 for Murder, and was given 321 days credit, and sentenced to 58 years by at a jury trial.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Orejel has received four institutional tickets. On August 22, 2005, he received a ticket for impairment of surveillance and insolence. On February 10, 2008, he received a ticket for unauthorized movement. On September 17, 2009, he received a ticket for unauthorized movement, abuse of privileges and disobeying a direct order. On August 20, 2012, he received a ticket for contraband and unauthorized property.

Mr. Orejel claims he is not involved in a gang and has not been. There is no indication to dispute otherwise. The statement of facts does document that he had a tattoo signifying 2-6 affiliation when he was arrested for the murder. During the interview, Mr. Orejel claimed no gang association. He quoted his father, who said, “Your reputation as a gang member is perceived, but your character is achieved.”

Mr. Orejel was raised in the neighborhood known as the “Back of the Yards.” This community is known for gang activity and gang violence, and it would not be out of the ordinary for young boys and men to be influenced to join for protection or forced as a way of family life.



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The petition reports that Mr. Orejel presented with learning disabilities and was placed in a school beyond the familiar parameters of his neighborhood. Subsequently, he dropped out of elementary school as an 8th grader. The petition describes him as a different learner. He remains on the waiting list for educational opportunities at Menard Correctional Center. He was tested for educational level in 2005, and he has yet to receive any approved educational programming; he remains on the waiting list.

Mr. Orejel is a father. His daughter is 18 years of age and has been diagnosed with a moderate cognitive delay, learning disability. She is the daughter of the victim of the domestic battery he is charged with and the violation of the order of protection. He remains in contact with his daughter during his incarceration.

He has family willing to support a parole plan to help his transition to the community. He speaks to his father almost daily by phone, his daughter every other week, and his siblings. COVID-19 prohibited contact, and Menard is far for family members to visit regularly. They remain in contact by phone. He did receive a visit this year for his birthday in February.

He has not had an opportunity to work in the facility and submitted a request for authorization to be considered for a job assignment there.

Since there is limited opportunity at Menard, he has requested to transfer facilities to access programming, but all his transfer requests have been denied.

Since a child, he has enjoyed working with electronics, and he hopes to take this skill back to the community to support him financially. He learned this skill from his uncle when he dropped out of school in eighth grade. He is an artist and draws portrait cards for his family. His favorite thing to draw is roses. He enjoys cooking for others and looks forward to cooking for his family one day soon.

When asked what he does to support him in making good choices, he stated “surrounding himself with good, positive people”, requested counseling, and looked for programming opportunities like how to start a business. He was introduced to the correspondence business opportunity by a peer and took the initiative to explore this opportunity further.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. Orejel stated that his account of the incident was that he was planning to hang out with friends to play basketball at St. Michael's Church, which helps with keeping kids off the street. His friends were taking showers and taking longer than expected, so he took off and walked towards 48th Street. As he was walking, he saw a female and two brothers he knew from the neighborhood but didn't know the other guy who was the victim.

He took only seven steps when someone tapped him on his back. He felt the brothers were trying to check him for his gang affiliation. He knew they were gang bangers. The victim started punching him, and they started fighting. He heard someone say, “Shoot that Nigger”, heard a shot and stopped fighting. Mr. Isaac Saucedo, in the moment, handed him a gun, and he took it. He could not see anyone, but then saw a Cavalier and shot two times towards the car. He ran towards the gangway and



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the brothers started running behind him. Everything happened so fast. He didn't realize anyone got shot until his sister told him later someone got shot at the place where he was accosted. He then knew it was his incident.

The victim told him to tell them he was not a gang banger, and the victim thought the petitioner was with them. He stated that he did not know the victim. He was just on his way to play basketball. He was 20 feet from the gym when this happened.

He never saw the girl before, but during the trial, the victim was driving around in the car. The guys saw the girl, and the victim was trying to talk to her. He finally got out of the car and started talking to her, and then that's when everything happened. During the trial, she said she knew them but was not with them by herself.

In the heat of the moment, he shot at the car, and he was scared and angry, too. He was just beaten. After he knew his actions resulted in the death of Cesar Behar he was scared and slept in his house for one or two days. He left for Texas to live with his aunt for two years. When he returned from Texas, he lived with his cousin for six months. He thought about turning himself in, but was afraid of going to jail. His parents were telling him to turn himself in, giving him good advice or it would get worse. His worst fear was going to jail. Chicago Police Department arrested him at his cousin's house.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Orejel plans on living with his parents, but he will also live on his own if necessary. He has sought opportunities with several neighborhood establishments, and each has committed to providing one upon his release. He has possible job opportunities with Tradition Barber Parlor, cleaning and maintenance; Navarro's Concrete, concrete work; New Spark 26 Auto Parts, part sales and delivery; Rockwell Tire Shop, Tire replacement and repair; and 21st Century Masonry Restoration Inc., construction work.

He will work with the reentry counselor to secure medical coverage and anything else they can support him with. An assessment for reentry was completed, and it reflected a low risk of reoffending. This was completed when he was 24 and demonstrated early in his life he was at low risk of reoffending. In addition, it documents his compassion and empathy and the ability to discern the value of good decision-making. The value of family and supporting them financially, and the value of not associating with hostile individuals. He also shared at the time the value of education and clinical programming that has not been made available since 2005, regardless of his motivation and initiative.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

There is no opposition on file.



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ENBANC HISTORY

Open Executive Session: CTERRONES - JBOHLAND

Close Executive Session: MCOATES - WDELGADO

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Mr. Cesar Orejel stated that he is now 40 years old, and he realizes how young and immature his mind was back then. He has committed himself to making good choices. He has been approved to live in a medium security where he is surrounded by positive people. He stated that he is wanting to get out to work at his brother's friend's barber shop and help his daughter in life and be there for her. He stated that he is sorry for his actions and all the pain he has caused. He stated that if he is given another chance, he will teach youth to do better so that something like that doesn't happen again.

Ms. Sheree Davis, Mr. Cesar Orejel's attorney, stated that she wanted to clarify that the statement of facts was inaccurate. He was not gang affiliated and never was. Domestic battery was stricken, and it involved Mr. Orejel's daughter's mother, and she showed up to his home intoxicated and he asked her to leave, once she left, she called the police. She stated that she then filed an order of protection and re-engaged with him, and he was charged with violating that order of protection. Tickets were early on in his incarceration, and it was due to him not fully understanding policies. Once he started learning the rules, he no longer had any infractions. As to the services provided to Mr. Orejel, he has a slight learning disability. He doesn't always retain information. That is why he wrote down his thoughts to present to the Board today. He has engaged in educational services while in IDOC, but he has not been able to pass most classes. He has taken a computer course since his interview, and he has learned how to navigate the electronic process. Mr. Orejel was the person who prepared his petition on his own. He has been diligent in his effort to get what he needs to better himself. Since his institutional hearing he has asked for assistance, and they told him that certain programming is given by the amount of time individuals have left on their sentence. She stated that Mr. Orejel has done well with seeking opportunities for gainful employment outside of the facility. There have been institutional barriers for him to be able to work. He has a certification for completion for his food handlers license and certificated for learning how to own a business. He has also learned how to become a barber within IDOC. He is eligible to work but people with less time get the jobs before him. She stated that they have contacted Precious Blood, and Mr. Orejel is approved for their program. She stated that Precious Blood is in his community. He had lived in a community where his decision was heavily influenced by the negative neighborhood he grew up in because he was subjected to gang violence and was intimidated. She stated that Mr. Orejel takes accountability for his actions. He is remorseful and consistent. She stated that he has taken the accountability to change himself and he is self-motivated. He is heavily supported by his family, and he has a list of neighbors willing to offer him a job. This is something that he has worked for and created for himself. He has a disabled 18-year-old daughter that he wants to help and take care of. She stated that he is going to stay out of trouble and stay away from places that would not better his life.

Ms. Shoffner questioned if he takes accountability for initiating this incident.



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Mr. Heaton questioned the resentencing hearing in 2022, and what counsel suggested should be imposed during that hearing.

Ms. Davis stated that she was unaware what his attorney asked for at the resentencing hearing.

The Board Members, Mr. Orejel, and Ms. Davis discussed a tattoo on Mr. Orejel that the Statement of facts claims was a "26" which represented a gang, and Mr. Orejel had that tattoo covered with a "J." Mr. Orejel stated that the tattoo was originally 3 dots that he received when he was 12 years old. He saw this tattoo in a movie, and allowed his friends to do the tattoo. It was discussed that he covered the tattoo with a "J" to represent his daughter.

Mr. Terrones stated that Mr. Orejel shared with her that he has taken accountability for his involvement in the crime. She stated that he knew he shot at the victim but didn't realize the shots took his life. He has taken accountability for the death that he was involved in. He has reflected on his negative patterns as a youth.

Mr. Grubbs questioned Mr. Orejel's parole plan, and him wanting to reside with his father. He questioned if that is in the same neighborhood where the crime occurred and if that presents any possible issues.

Mr. Davis stated that the neighborhood is the same, but it has changed.

Ms. Globokar questioned the three dots tattoo he received when he was 13.

Mr. Orejel stated that it was in a movie, on the block, and him and his friend did the tattoo themselves. He stated that some gangs do use 3 dots to represent them, but he was a child and was not affiliated with a gang.

Ms. Globokar stated that when there is recent resentencing, they consider the reduction. She questioned Mr. Orejel what the State's Attorney stated.

Mr. Orejel stated that they argued to give him the max. He stated that his attorney didn't argue for the minimum, and they left it up to the judge. The judge made the determination.

Mr. Tupy questioned the gang issue in his petition, Ms. Amy Puntez was walking with the defendant and the victim during the altercation, and she stated that the defendant flashed a gang sign at Mr. Cesar Orejel, and it set him off. He questioned why the resentencing judge went thirteen years over the minimum number of years that could've been given.

Ms. Davis stated that he has no gang affiliation, but it is Ms. Puntez's articulation of her account of the events. Stated that she did not have the resentencing information. He did attempt employment; he has had some counseling but there has been no cognitive assessment or treatment. They have been requested but not done. He was deemed eligible to work but he was never placed in a job.



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End of discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to grant parole (CTERRONES - DGOFF). Motion failed with a 4-7 vote. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Coates, Mr. Delgado, Ms. Goff, and Ms. Terrones. Mr. Bohland, Ms. Globokar, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Shoffner, Ms. Tison, and Mr. Tupy dissented.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Cesar Orejel'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. Orejel'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 July 25, 2024**

Individual in Custody's Name: Raymond Larson

IDOC Number: C10475

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on July 25, 2024, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Raymond Larson C10475.

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.

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 June 11th, 2024, Mr. Raymond Larson (spelled "Larsen" prior to incarceration) was interviewed by board member Ms. Julie Globokar via WebEx at Hill Correctional Center. The interview began at 9:14am and ended at 10:33am. Also present was Mr. Larson's attorney, Ms. Emelia Carroll. Mr. Larson was well groomed, in prison blues, and engaged readily in conversation.

Mr. Larson is 79 years old and has been incarcerated for most of the last 53 years, with two brief



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releases in 1972 and 2021. He was 27 at the time he committed the holding offense of murder in 1972, 52 years ago.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Mr. Larson is serving a sentence for Murder with Intent, one of a string of offenses committed while on furlough from a prior sentence. In 1971, he received a two-to-eight-year term for Robbery and three counts of Burglary. He was granted a furlough that was scheduled to run from May 12 to May 15, 1972. On May 14, he went to the Elmwood Park Ford Dealership, broke in, and stole a Mustang. On May 17, he entered a home at gunpoint, forced the occupant to perform oral sex, and took a rifle and other items. His fingerprints were found in the apartment. The same evening as the home invasion, 16-year-old Mr. Francis “Frank” Casolari failed to return home. His body was located the next morning in North Schiller Woods with 23 gunshot wounds to the head, chest, stomach, scrotum, and back. A beer can nearby had Mr. Larson’s fingerprints. The following day, Mr. Larson was located in the stolen Mustang with his brother, and an underage girl in the vehicle who had been reported missing the prior evening. The rifle from the home invasion was recovered from the vehicle and identified as the weapon used to kill Mr. Casolari.

At bench trial Mr. Larson admitted to the murder but brought up the plea of insanity. He was found guilty and sentenced to 100-to-300-years. He also pled guilty to a deviate sexual assault from the home invasion and received a four-to-twelve-year sentence for that offense. According to the prosecutor of the case, he likely would have received the death penalty had it been in force at the time. The sentencing judge stated: “Here we have a crime of the most heinous kind, particularly vicious...it’s an unprovoked, motiveless, cold blooded absolutely senseless killing of a young boy...shocking...to the social conscience.” Per the 2013 State’s Attorney letter, the judge indicated that the “maximum sentence should and must be imposed,” and that “in this kind of case there ought to be some clear-cut communication to the Parole and Pardon Board which would lift this kind of case out of the...usual or ordinary...”

Mr. Larson appealed, finding his sentence excessive; the Appellate Court found the Trial Court did not abuse its discretion.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Larson had an extensive criminal history, including several convictions. In 1968, he pled guilty to a Burglary and Auto Theft, resulting in a five-year probation sentence with one year in the House of Corrections. The following year, while serving his probation sentence, he was charged with a Rape that was ultimately convicted as a Battery, receiving six months of probation. In January of 1970, while still on probation for that offense, he was accused of at least five invasions of homes with female occupants. In one instance, he stabbed the sleeping occupant in her shoulder and breast; in another, he choked the female occupant who opened the door. From that string of offenses, he pled guilty to a Robbery and three counts of Burglary and received a two-to-eight-year sentence of incarceration with a concurrent two-to-four-years for each violation of probation. It was this prison sentence from which he was on furlough when he committed the string of offenses that included Mr. Casolari’s murder.



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INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

In Mr. Larson's interview, he described his family as law abiding, decent, hardworking people. He attributed his path to peer pressure or too much TV, whereas his petition describes his father as a debt collector for the Chicago mafia and suggests Mr. Larson was desensitized to greed and violence at a young age.

Mr. Larson has maintained a relatively strong institutional history during his periods of incarceration. During the prison term that preceded his holding offense, he impressed the staff so much that he was assigned to work as the Captain's clerk and to assist the coordinator of the Jaycees reentry work program at Joliet and had a tentative offer for employment after his release. A 1971 assessment, again conducted shortly before his crime spree while on furlough, deemed him to be "high-average intelligence" with a "bright and quick" calculating ability and recommended him for minimum security.

After the present offense, he attended barber school in 1980, achieved his high school equivalency in 1983, received two associate degrees in general studies and in applied science in food service technology in 1999), and a Bachelor of General Studies in 1995.

He has held several work assignments, including five years as forklift operator from 2017 to 2021, several years as a baker in the officer's kitchen from 2013 to 2016, and other positions including clerk in Catholic Chaplain's office, unit clerk, instructor's aide for a college-level baking course, press operator, data entry, and more. At his current institution of Hill, he has yet to be provided with the opportunity for any work assignment, and expressed disappointment about the lack of educational opportunities in light of his desire to earn a Master's degree or even Doctorate if afforded the opportunity. He meditates daily and continues his self-study of religion, having expressed interest in Buddhism as early as 1971 and continued along this vein to the present day.

He has received some tickets in custody, only five of which have been since the implementation of the digitized system in 1998, with only one ticket since 2005. In contrast to a claim that appears in his petition that he has "received no tickets involving violent or threatening behavior," the ticket was for intimidation or threats, in 2022, resulting in a verbal reprimand. The counselor received two letters from Mr. Larson stating that his placement in general population at a medium security facility "would result in potentially extreme violence and someone's death" and he was "seriously attempting to prevent extreme behavior, on my part, and that of others."

Elsewhere in his petition it's suggested these communications were taken out of context, and he was expressing concern for his own safety. Mr. Larson has spent a great deal of his time in protective custody, which he has repeatedly requested, stating a belief that his life would be in danger in general population. While these requests date to at least 1973, since 1981, they have been on the premise that his life was in danger due to his involvement in preventing a staff assault that year by notifying authorities of two concealed razors.

Mr. Larson was the subject of a criminal investigation by the Federal Crime Lab in Chicago for a letter he sent from prison in 1979; this Board lacks access to federal court records to assess whether any charges or convictions stemmed from the investigation. The letter threatened to destroy the life of



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the recipient if he didn't send \$2,000 to Mr. Larson, stating that Mr. Larson didn't, "care one iota about what the authorities can possibly do to me," and "Damn the authorities and anyone else, you've had it old friend, get cracking and send me that money!" At the time, Mr. Larson admitted to sending the letter but did not believe it should have resulted in institutional disciplinary action, but rather handled solely by law enforcement, since it didn't pertain to any other individuals in custody.

Mr. Larson has had several unsuccessful periods on community supervision. Most of his crimes were committed either while on probation or, as with his holding offense, while on furlough. He was also revoked by this Board subsequent to a 2021 release during which he went AWOL.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. Larson takes sole responsibility for Mr. Casolari's death, indicating he acted alone. He has given slightly different accounts over the years. The 2013 State's Attorney letter indicated he said he was "just looking for something to shoot when he saw the kid." In recent years, including the current interview, he stated that the victim was fishing and yelled at him to turn down the volume to his boom box so as not to scare the fish away; he claims that he killed the victim when the victim threatened to call the police. The current petition attributes the murder in part to Mr. Larson's drunken perception of the confrontation, although at the time Mr. Larson told the police and Assistant State's Attorney that he was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the crime. Mr. Larson expresses the understanding that the crime was "really horrible" and the choices he made at that time in his life brought nothing but pain and sorrow.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Larson's parole plan is to return to New Beginnings, the halfway house from which he absconded in 2021. An arrangement has been made with the Executive Director of 770 Reentry to pick him up upon release. Safer Foundation would help him apply for public benefits and job training. He has his social security card and has already applied for birth certificate replacement. He plans to participate in the Buddhist faith community. He expressed interest in baking or doing warehouse work and pursuing a Master's degree. NAMI will be utilized for mental health counseling, and he is approved for Medicaid.

Mr. Larson is not in contact with his family but would benefit from the support of the team of services compiled in collaboration with his legal team.

Mr. Larson had six letters of support prior to his release in 2021, including letters from two Buddhist nuns and two friends who had been corresponding with him for quite some time; an individual who had served time with Mr. Larson and considered him a father figure; and a law professor acquainted with that other individual. They spoke of his faith and remorse, and described Mr. Larson as quiet, personable, and remorseful.

Mr. Larson was assessed for sexually violent person status by the Attorney General subsequent to the vote to release by this Board in 2021 and was not identified as such; the Attorney General at the time declined the opportunity to seek a second opinion.



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OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

The State's Attorney has previously written in opposition. The most recent letter I could locate was from 2018, calling for a five-year set due to Mr. Larson's extensive criminal background and their belief he would be unable to conform to reasonable conditions of parole.

Any other opposition will be discussed in closed session.

ENBANC HISTORY

Mr. Larson has been considered at en banc thirty-three times since he was first eligible for parole in 1980. He was considered annually until 2003, when he was given a three-year set; he also received multi-year sets of three-to-five years in 2008, 2013, and 2018. He hadn't received a single vote in favor of parole until 2021, when this Board released Mr. Larson by a vote of nine-to-three. Since his revocation, he has received two more unanimous denials in 2022 and 2023.

In 2021 Mr. Larson was considered an instant absconder. He attributed this initial status to fearing for his life at his original host site, believing that another resident was familiar with his 1981 prevention of a staff assault. He was diverted six days later, and arrangements were made for Mr. Larson to transfer to a different location run by the same host New Beginnings, but the agent was subsequently unable to reach him through any available means, including through his attorney. An AWOL warrant was issued, and he was taken into custody on May 27, 2021, in Chicago. It was verified that during this AWOL period he had traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio via bus to visit a friend in the hospital. While Mr. Larson did not recall this interaction when first asked, his attorney indicates that his subsequent AWOL was prompted by an interaction with an officer while Mr. Larson was on his way to a pharmacy, in which he heard the officer use the word "diversion" and interpreted it as an order to return to his first host site where he feared for his life. According to the petition, his lack of prior exposure to smart phones made it difficult for him to contact his parole officer, host site, or attorney to navigate the situation. He was violated for the AWOL violations, leaving the state without permission, and failing to complete his sex offender treatment, and revoked by this Board.

Open Executive Session: JGLOBOKAR - MCOATES

Close Executive Session: KTISON - JGRUBBS

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Ms. Emelia Carroll, Mr. Larson's attorney, stated that he is no longer represented by Cabrini Greene, she is representing him pro bono. She stated that Mr. Larson was released in 2021, and we are here to his technical violation. His conduct while on parole did not include violence, and he made a parole violation. He is a very low risk of recidivism. Parole violation 3 years ago, cannot be changed. But, what he can do is stay on track and reflect on what happened in 2021 and plan for his future. After his institutional hearing he wrote a letter about his current physical health situation. His letter stated that he will be 80 years old in January and has served 54 years in prison. He has been diagnosed with two



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serious health problems. She stated that he said that he was going to support an old friend who was hospitalized, and it was the wrong choice. She stated that Mr. Larson has communicated multiple times that he is willing to be placed on GPS and electronic monitoring. He did lose access to his social workers that was here on his behalf last year. She stated that it is increasingly difficult to find housing in Cook County for him, but she is committed to keep working on it. If he is denied today, she is going to be looking into further mental health checks for him, and his executive functioning and adaptive functioning. Mr. Larson has no intention to do harm on parole.

Ms. Nicole Bartell, Assistant Attorney General from the Sexually Violent Persons Bureau, stated that if Mr. Larson was paroled today the Attorney General's office is requesting a 90 day stay for an evaluation pursuant to the sexually violent act.

End of discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (JGLOBOKAR - JBOHLAND). Motion prevails by a unanimous vote.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Raymond Larson'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. Larson'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 July 25, 2024**

Individual in Custody's Name: James Barksdale *

IDOC Number: C01793

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on July 25, 2024, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for James Barksdale * C01793.

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.

Recording Secretary: Alexandria Bryan.



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PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

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

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Mr. James Barksdale C01793 was interviewed live via Webex virtual platform from Illinois River Correctional Center on June 13, 2024, at 9:45 a.m. Mr. Barksdale represented himself without legal counsel. Mr. Barksdale was dressed in blue prison issue uniform with a jacket. He appeared quiet, soft spoken, and polite.

Mr. Barksdale's holding convictions include 1971 convictions out of Cook County for Rape resulting in a 50-to-100-year sentence and Deviate Sexual Assault resulting in a concurrent 10-to-14-year sentence, as well as 1972 convictions out of Cook County for Rape resulting in a 75-to-150-year sentence and Deviate Sexual Assault resulting in a 4-to-14-year sentence. IDOC clarified that Mr. Barksdale no longer has a separate Mandatory Supervised Release date as he is only eligible for parole by way of the Prisoner Review Board at En Banc. His maximum release date is June 14th, 2047. Mr. Barksdale is currently 86 years old and was 33 at the time of the holding offense. Of the 53 years that have passed since that time, roughly 37 years have been spent in IDOC custody before being released to parole by way of the Prisoner Review Board at En Banc in 2006. This was followed by around 15 years of commitment to the IDHS Rushville Treatment Detention Center as well as roughly 1 year on public parole release before being revoked and returned to IDOC custody in 2022.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On June 23rd, 1971, the victim, Ms. Susan Studz, was walking south in the 3000 block on North Sheridan Road when she was forced into an automobile by the petitioner, Mr. Barksdale, and driven to a field somewhere southwest of the city and forced to perform various sexual acts.

Mr. Barksdale got out of his car, struck Ms. Studz over the head with a gun, forced her into his car, and drove her to a secluded area where he raped her. During the abduction, the petitioner forced the victim to lay on the floor of the car, held a gun to her head, and threatened to kill her if she did not cooperate. When he got to a remote area, the petitioner retrieved a cord from the trunk, dragged her from the vehicle, and threw her onto a sleeping bag he had stretched out on the ground. The petitioner ripped her blouse and removed her bra and pants. He ordered the victim to perform oral sex. He then repeatedly struck the victim with an automatic pistol causing her injury to her breast and head. The petitioner then orally raped the victim. During the acts of deviate conduct, he continued to strike the victim in the face and chest. After the incident, he allowed the victim to get dressed and placed her back into the rear of the vehicle. There, the petitioner then again asked the victim to remove her clothes and then forced the victim to have vaginal and anal intercourse with him. The victim sustained multiple injuries to her forehead, breasts, buttocks, and legs. The petitioner then drove his car to a location on the south side of the city where he dropped her off in an alley and fled. The victim immediately reported the rape to two nearby men, at which point, police responded, and the victim was taken to the hospital.

While this matter was on trial, the petitioner also had five other pending rape charges, four of



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which occurred in 1971, and another which occurred in March of 1972 after he was released on bond awaiting trial in this case. While on bond, he was arrested in the Greyhound Bus Terminal and charged with kidnapping and raping a Wisconsin housewife.

On March 18th, 1972, the victim was in transit from Michigan City, Indiana, to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. As she was waiting at the Greyhound bus station in Chicago around 3 p.m. the petitioner approached her and engaged her in conversation and convinced her to leave the station for a short time to visit a social agency he claimed to be a social worker for. After some time, she finally agreed to walk two blocks with him as she thought it was the only way to get rid of him. They left the station and after walking down the street, the petitioner grabbed the victim and pulled her into a garbage room. She screamed and tried to flee. She fought with the petitioner, pulling off his glasses and throwing them to the ground. The victim cried and begged to be let go, but the petitioner hit her and dragged her into a dark room where he forced her to perform oral intercourse. When she refused, the petitioner hit her on both sides of the head and in the chest threatening to kill her. The petitioner claimed to have razor blades. She refused again at which point the petitioner began to beat her again. He then pushed her down and forcefully raped her. The victim was allowed to put her clothes back on after the rape, and she begged to be taken back to the bus station. At the station, the victim went to the bathroom. The victim was crying hysterically at which point the petitioner reported the rape to the washroom attendant who in turn summoned security. The petitioner was stopped by security. The victim was bruised and scratched and was bleeding from the vagina. The court imposed lengthy sentences because of the nature of the crimes.

The petitioner has previously been convicted in 1958 of two charges of rape at 25 years each, Assault to Rape at 10 to 14 years, and Armed Robbery 10 to 14 years. He was paroled in 1965, but violated that same year with a charge of Petty Theft. He was paroled again in 1967, and ultimately fully discharged from parole in February 1970. By August 1971, he was arrested and charged with abducting and raping five women, including two Evanston, Illinois teenagers. The five rape cases plus this matter involved a total of 16 sex related cases.

The petitioner was paroled by the Prisoner Review Board in 2006 after they found him to be a good risk, but the Illinois Attorney General's Office petitioned to have Mr. Barksdale declared to be a Sexually Violent Person at which time he was committed to the Department of Human Services Rushville Treatment Detention Center. The petitioner remained at that center until release to the community in 2021. On February 3rd, 2021, the petitioner was released to reside with his sister in Chicago. The petitioner was released to community with PRB orders including 180 days electronic monitoring, outpatient mental health services, close supervision, and sex offender counseling, along with all mandatory sex offense conviction parole rules. On March 31st, 2021, the petitioner refused sex offender services, however he was diverted and re-referred for services. On April 5th, 2021, the Petitioner's host and sister called the police reporting that the Petitioner had threatened to kill her husband. Ms. Heath did not press charges, so the Petitioner was not taken into custody, but he subsequently left the residence and went AWOL. On April 6th, 2021, the Petitioner was arrested by Cook County Forest Preserve Police on IDOC warrant, and although diversion was attempted, the Petitioner could not provide an alternative host site and was returned to custody. The Petitioner was found to be in violation of rules 3, 4, and 16 by the PRB on May 11th, 2021, and Board Members over the hearing agreed to resume the Petitioner back to parole with additional conditions of another 30 days



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of electronic monitoring.

The Petitioner was resumed back to parole to reside at New Beginnings on August 13th, 2021. He was further advised of his need to register with the Chicago Police Department as a sex offender. The Petitioner had four AWOL script warrants for electronic monitoring violations in August of 2021 alone. The Petitioner had three reprimands for failing to register as a sex offender in December 2021, January 2022, and February 2022. In April of 2022, the Petitioner was reprimanded for using mind altering substances, marijuana at the host site. Petitioner lost his host site on May 7th, 2022, and without an alternative host site, the Petitioner was returned to custody. The Petitioner was found to be in violation of rules 1 for failing to register as a sex offender as well as rules 11, 12, and 16 on June 6th, 2022, and his parole was unanimously revoked by the Board Members on that hearing with notes that he had violated his board granted parole twice in the past two years.

It should be noted that the Petitioner has filed a significant amount of post-conviction petitions of various forms over the years, all of which have been denied.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

As already mentioned within the statement of facts, Mr. Barksdale has a concerning history of similar crimes including multiple rapes and an Armed Robbery in 1958 followed by Petty Theft and parole violation in 1965 and an arrest in 1968 for Unlawful Use of Weapon. Mr. Barksdale had a prior period of parole in 1965 which he violated and was paroled again in 1967 for the same holding offenses. He was first paroled in 2006 by the Prisoner Review Board but ultimately released to the public in 2021. He violated his parole in both 2021 and 2022 before having his parole revoked and returned to custody.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Barksdale states that he communicates with both his family. He is as a chaplain at Operation Push. He shared he has a sister who is a probation officer as well as a sister in Wisconsin. He then clarified that the probation officer is actually his sister Barbara's daughter and not his sister. Barbara is the sister with whom he lived when first released from DHS Rushville in 2021.

Per the 2024 Offender Overview, the petitioner has been in the infirmary since returning to custody after revocation.

Mr. Barksdale stated that he started sex offender services in the past but turned them down because he was married and maintained his innocence. Per the 2024 Offender Overview, Mr. Barksdale has not taken part in any programming since return to custody in 2022 due to being in the infirmary. It should be noted that there are indications in the record that Mr. Barksdale never took part in any sex offender services at DHS Rushville despite being there as a declared Sexually Violent Person.

Mr. Barksdale's disciplinary history includes 32 tickets on the old forms from 1973 to 1993 with numerous periods of segregation. He had 5 minors and 4 major tickets from 2001 up until his 2006 parole. Since returning to custody in 2022, Mr. Barksdale has accrued 1 major ticket in 2022 for major



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insolence due to screaming at a nurse.

Mr. Barksdale has earned a bachelor's degree from Lewis University in 1979, a Bachelor's from Northern Illinois University in 1982, a Certificate in Paralegal Science in 1995, and 30 hours in Computer Science from Carl Sandburg College in 1997. Mr. Barksdale claims that he helped create the Dawson Vocational Institute in Chicago while he was out on parole. In addition, he has earned a sanitation license, a barber license, has taken vocational tech math, and is claims to be a barber's apprentice.

Mr. Barksdale's institutional work history only exists prior to his 2006 release to parole where he had various work assignments including a longer tenure as a janitor. The 2024 Offender Overview confirms he has had no access to jobs since his return to custody in 2022.

Per the 2023 Offender Overview, the petitioner still scored as a moderate risk on the ORAS assessment, and at the time, IDOC was recommending programming for drug education, thinking for a change, financial literacy, and re-entry related services. He has not completed any programming since his return to custody.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. Barksdale still maintains his innocence. He stated in this year's interview that he tried since he was originally paroled to comply with expectations. He states that his parole violations were based solely on allegations made. Mr. Barksdale maintains his innocence in both the 1971 and 1972 convictions. He continues to argue that in 1971 he was the victim of a mistaken identity, and he argues that they already caught the real guy. He maintains that in 1972 he was a political target based on marrying the daughter of a prominent and high-ranking member of Mayor Daley's administration. The petitioner claims that this father-in-law disapproved of their relationship and had him falsely framed for rape. He stated that, "they tried to charge me with three offenses and only one stuck." This is consistent with the arguments of innocence made in 2023 both at his En Banc interview as well as in writing.

Later, during the course of the interview, Mr. Barksdale argued that he continued to try and prove his innocence over the years but could never prove anything. He argued that once you are identified by a person you are cooked. He also suggested that police persistence leads to removing any doubt at lineups. Additionally, he went on to argue that he tried to do his parole, but pressures from the past got him sent back to prison.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Barksdale intends to live with his sister Barbara and her husband if released to parole, just as he was in 2021, despite this parole plan not being viable or appropriate. He plans to look for employment. He also debated starting off with release to St. Leonard's as well but has not made any progress in that direction.

Major factors that could have an impact on his release at this time include both a lack of viable host site as well as at the very least a history of commitment as a Sexually Violent Person despite them



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removing his status and releasing him to community in 2021.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

Cook County State's Attorney last wrote an opposition letter in 2005 just prior to release with numerous prior letters before that. They added information to the statement of facts at the time and suggested that his 150-year maximum sentence was a statement that he should never be released. They reminded the Board at the time that the Petitioner was paroled only 7 years into a 25-year sentence for multiple rapes, and that he committed the holding offense shortly after.

EN BANC HISTORY

Mr. Barksdale was first considered for parole under these holding offenses in 1981. He was heard 22 times prior to his release being granted by the PRB in 2006 with release to DHS Rushville. This is his second time being heard since his return to custody after being revoked in 2022. He has only received a single 3-year set in 2001.

Open Executive Session: JBOHLAND – KTISON

Close Executive Session: JBOHLAND - MCOATES

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

No discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (JBOHLAND - KTISON). Motion prevails by a unanimous vote.

Motion for 3-year set (JBOHLAND – KTISON). Motion prevails by a unanimous vote.

After thorough consideration of Mr. James Barksdale'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. Barksdale'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."