



STATE OF ILLINOIS
 JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD

Donald Shelton, Chair

**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET OPEN
 SESSION— November 30, 2023**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on November 30, 2023, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following individuals in custody:

C77200	Columbo, Patricia *
R33368	Jackson, Darron

The meeting was called to order by Donald Shelton, Chair.
 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. LeAnn Miller	X	
Mr. Donald Shelton, Chair	X	
Ms. Robin Shoffner	X	
Ms. Carmen Terrones	X	
Ms. Krystal Tison	X	
Mr. Kenneth Tupy	X	

13 Members Present 0 Members Absent

The Board heard the case of Patricia Columbo C77200, and Darron Jackson R33368 as detailed in the individual case minutes.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL for 11/2/2023: WD-MC

Open Session: RS-RH

Closed Session: RH-KT

Meeting was adjourned by (RH-KT) Leave.



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION November 2, 2023

Individual in custody's Name: Patricia Columbo* IDOC Number: C77200

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on November 30, 2023, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Patricia Columbo C77200.

Members present were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Delgado, Ms. Globokar, Ms. Goff, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Miller, Ms. Terrones, Ms. Tison, Mr. Tupy, and Mr. Shelton, Chairman, Ms. Shoffner.

Recording Secretary: Alexandria Bryan.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Shoffner stated that this case is being continued to the February 29, 2024 En Banc hearing.

End of discussion.



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION November 2, 2023

Individual in custody's Name: Darron Jackson IDOC Number: R33368

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on November 30, 2023, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Darron Jackson R33368.

Members present were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Delgado, Ms. Globokar, Ms. Goff, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Miller, Ms. Terrones, Ms. Tison, Mr. Tupy, and Mr. Shelton, Chairman, Ms. Shoffner.

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 October 20, 2023, Mr. Darron Jackson was interviewed by Board Member Ms. Julie Globokar via WebEx at Menard Medium Security Correctional Center, where he is serving a 23-year sentence for murder. The interview began at 9:04am and ended at approximately 9:45am. Also, present were attorney Ms. Carolyn Klarquist and Mr. Darron Jackson's sister, Ms. Tamara Jackson, and his mother and father, Ms. Margaret Jackson, and Mr. Donald Jackson.

Mr. Darron Jackson was 36 years old at the time of the interview. He has been in custody since 2003, when he was 16 years old. His time within Illinois Department of Corrections has been served at Menard Correctional Center, in Maximum security until his transfer to medium security last year.

Mr. Darron Jackson appeared well groomed, alert, and of good health at the interview. He was engaged and articulate throughout.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Mr. Darron Jackson was convicted for the September 10, 2003 murder of Mr. Kenneth Porter Jr. in Maywood, Illinois, when he was 16 years old. He and the victim had gone to school together since kindergarten but had different gang affiliations; the victim had allegedly become a ranking member of the Black Disciples, and Mr. Darron Jackson was a member of the Black P Stone Nation. The day prior to the murder, the two had words at school, during a time of heightened gang tensions in Maywood, Illinois. A security guard at the school testified he overheard a conversation in which Mr. Darron Jackson told the victim what would happen when he was shot by the Stones, even throwing himself



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against a locker in an enactment of a person being shot. Individuals claimed that Mr. Darron Jackson made comments that “Stones don’t fight no more, we shoot,” and that he was going to “get” the victim after school.

On the day of the shooting, school had been let out early. As students were walking home, Mr. Darron Jackson walked up to the victim, pulled a gun from his pants, extended his arm, and fired three shots, hitting the victim in the chest at the intersection of Fourth and Madison in front of several witnesses. Mr. Darron Jackson was seen fleeing into a nearby home. Witnesses included friends and relatives of the victim, an off-duty officer who was working in that area as a security guard, and an individual who happened to be driving past.

A friend allegedly hid the murder weapon for Mr. Darron Jackson; it was never recovered. Mr. Darron Jackson pled not guilty and denied several allegations made at trial pertaining to the murder and the events that led up to it. He was convicted by a jury. He was initially sentenced to 60 years. His sentence was reduced to 50 years in 2007. Based on new case law that deemed this to be an unconstitutional *de facto* life sentence, he was resentenced again in September 2021, this time to 23 years at 100%, with parole eligibility at 20 years under the new youthful parole act. He is scheduled to be released on mandatory supervised release on May 27, 2026.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Darron Jackson has no other criminal history.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Darron Jackson has demonstrated positive institutional adjustment. He earned a high school diploma in 2011 with a 3.7 GPA. He has completed several programs dating back to his time in Cook County Jail prior to conviction. Over the years he has earned certificates in behavior management, Thinking for a Change, Lifestyle Redirection, Impact of Crime on Victims, Inside Out Dads, Money Smart, and Start Now. When he was recently held at Cook County Jail for resentencing, he was housed on the “program tier” and took several classes, including plant science, creative writing, sociology, and financial health.

He disassociated from his gang in 2012, which he indicates was accepted. He said he wanted to focus on his religion. His petition indicates continuous employment in the dining area, inmate commissary, knit shop, and inmate kitchen since 2013. This has only been interrupted by his transfer to Medium Security, where he thought he would have more access to employment, but his crime of conviction excludes him from outside clearance jobs, and the kitchen at the Medium Security facility has been closed down for a full year due to plumbing issues, limiting available positions.

Regarding his disciplinary history, Mr. Darron Jackson has only had 6 incidents that led to tickets within Illinois Department of Corrections, the last of which was in 2012 for theft and contraband & unauthorized property, for cheese in his laundry bag. He had a similar ticket in 2011. His only ticket for fighting was in 2009, fourteen years ago, when he and another inmate were allegedly swinging at each other with closed fists in the dining area; he denied involvement and had grieved the ticket. His



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only ticket for gang or unauthorized organizational activity was in 2005, eighteen years ago, when a teacher allegedly overheard him telling a classmate “You ain’t a true Stone.” Mr. Darron Jackson’s account was that the statement was heard out of context, indicating the other individual wasn’t even a Stone; they were talking about old school gangsters like Al Capone, and he said the other individual wasn’t a “true stone cold killa like they were.” It should be noted that Mr. Darron Jackson has had no tickets for the last 11 years.

Mr. Darron Jackson has been able to maintain close family ties while in prison despite being housed at Menard Correctional Center, six hours from his family. He initially pursued a transfer to Stateville Correctional Center to be closer, but once he was able to join the workforce and start taking classes in 2013, he refocused on those matters and stopped pursuing transfer. Even with the distance Mr. Darron Jackson’s family managed to visit him monthly early in his incarceration and have continued to stay in close communication since. As of September 2023, in the prior six months alone, he had received 25 video visits and 14 phone calls with family and friends.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

In the present day, Mr. Darron Jackson admits guilt and accepts full responsibility for the offense. He indicates he wishes he had handled things differently, not only on the day of the offense, but in the interpersonal dispute in the days leading up to the shooting. He states that at the time he felt like he had something to prove, like his toughness, and he wishes he would have talked to someone about what he was going through rather than escalating to violence. He indicated his heart goes out to the victim’s family. He expressed remorse and a desire to contribute the lessons from his experiences to preventing other 16-year-olds from committing a crime or losing their life in similar situations. He stated he processes his experience as having been that of not a first-time offender, but a “one-time offender.” He also indicated he will have a letter that he wants to read to the full board at his parole hearing.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Darron Jackson’s family has pledged support in the event of his release, as has his family’s congregation at Keystone Baptist Church. Mr. Darron Jackson intends to reside with his sister, Ms. Tamara Jackson, whose home has been approved as a host site by Illinois Department of Corrections. A family friend who owns a freight company has offered to assist him with securing his commercial driver’s license and provide employment as a full-time driver. She also owns a commercial cleaning company where he can work as he pursues his CDL. Mr. Darron Jackson also expressed an interest in becoming certified as a fitness trainer for an additional part-time job. He indicated that he has already studied for this certification but needs to wait until his release for a proctor which is required for the exam. He also expressed plans to become involved in his church’s youth group and to assist the church with food distribution.

All of these plans have been substantiated through letters of support and personal statements by his family and friends. Ms. Angela Patterson affirmed by phone that Mr. Darron Jackson can work for her cleaning and trucking companies and described in detail the research that Mr. Darron Jackson’s support system has done into possible CDL schools. Pastor Blackmond of Keystone Baptist Church was also



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contacted by phone, and indicated he has known the family for decades, watched Mr. Darron Jackson grow up. He found the crime out of character, believes Mr. Darron Jackson has a strong support system, and that he is personally interested in taking Mr. Darron Jackson under his wing. This includes involving him in the church's programming.

Specific letters of support include the assistant pastor and reverend at the church, his sister, two family friends, and a former churchgoer. Several other individuals were interviewed by a sentencing advocacy group leading up to Mr. Darron Jackson's resentencing, including many family members and a former teacher who expressed their confidence in his capacity for success. Mr. Darron Jackson's food supervisor at Menard Correctional Center was also interviewed and indicated that Mr. Darron Jackson was consistent in composure and appearance, got along with everyone, and was reliable in his work.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

No written opposition has been received regarding Mr. Darron Jackson's parole.

EN BANC HISTORY

This is Mr. Darron Jackson's first and only opportunity at en banc. If not granted release, his current mandatory supervised release date is May 27, 2026.



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DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Carolyn Klarquist, Darron Jackson's attorney, stated that this crime happened in broad daylight. He was arrested immediately and did not know the consequences of this crime. As a youth he had poor decision making. If this would have happened in 1983 it would have been a fist fight. Unfortunately, that is not what happened. He has gone 11 years at Menard Correctional Center with no tickets. He was 16, and he is 36 now. He has been in prison the majority of his life, and he was a child when this happened. Everything he has done while incarcerated is to better himself, he is a prime example of someone who tried and changed his ways. He wants to live in the suburbs with his sister. St. Leonard's will assist him with Mental Health needs and transitioning back into society.

Mr. Darron Jackson stated that he is guilty of a terrible crime, and he has thought about that every day since it happened. He stated that no punishment no matter how severe can take away what happened that day. He stated that he made this tragic decision at the age of 16. It was a terrible mistake, but he did not allow it to make him a terrible person. Instead of becoming a product of his environment in prison, he became a man and bettered himself. He stated that this will be an example for the youth, and a chance to share his story to detour youth from taking the wrong paths with gangs and violence.

Mr. Tupy questioned if Mr. Darron Jackson officially dropped out of the gang, he was in.

Ms. Klarquist stated that he just dropped out of the gang. She stated that sometimes individuals do not want to officially go through the process of renouncing officially as to not create issues with other inmates.

Mr. Tupy questioned if his calculations with working while incarcerated would change January 1, 2024.

Ms. Klarquist stated that he has met the youthful parole criteria, and he warrants release today.

Mr. Tupy questioned how long Mr. Darron Jackson had been carrying a gun around as a youth.

Mr. Darron Jackson stated that he had just received the gun the day before.

Ms. Klarquist stated that he had never in trouble before that day with the police. It was this one time, with a child.

Ms. Miller questioned the pending appeal that he has in his packet.

Ms. Klarquist stated when it was filed, he did. But, at this time he does not. He also has a clemency petition which was applied for before they knew the youthful parole petition would take place.

Mr. Heaton questioned when Mr. Darron Jackson first admitted guilt to the crime.



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Ms. Carolyn Klarquist, Mr. Darron Jackson's attorney, stated it was clear from the beginning that he was responsible. No statement was given to the police immediately, but he was 16.

Mr. Darron Jackson stated that he first took accountability for his actions throughout his incarceration. He stated that he publicly took accountability was his first hearing in 2021.

Mr. Heaton questioned what type of contact was made to the victim's family. He also asked Ms. Klarquist if she has any idea if the Porter family had protested previously.

Ms. Klarquist stated Ms. Porter was at the resentencing hearing. She stated that Mr. Darron Jackson has not contacted the Porter family.

Ms. Globokar stated that she was taking caution as to not extrapolate from the victim's mother's statement at sentencing. But this is the only victim statement to which there was access to present day. She stated that at sentencing the victim's mother spoke of the impact of the crime, indicating that she had known Mr. Darron Jackson since he was "knee high. Now look at you, a murderer, too young to really know what you have done, just a little boy who became a murderer because of a gun." Ms. Globokar noted there was documentation of victim notification from the PRB in the file, but no indication of a response.

Mr. Grubbs questioned the basis of the appeal. He stated that he was resentenced again, and he appealed it. He also questioned if in the clemency petition if Mr. Darron Jackson took accountability.

Ms. Klarquist stated that his previous attorney reviewed the record and created an appeal. There were no clear errors. Notices of appeal happen in pretty much every case. She stated the clemency request was for parole eligibility, and he took accountability for the crime.

Ms. Globokar questioned Mr. Darron Jackson to speak on the landscape of program availability at his current medium security facility."

Mr. Darron Jackson stated that people who need classes more get priority over him. He stated that he has not been working because the kitchen has been closed for a year. Most of the jobs at Menard Correctional Center are outside clearance and he stated that he is unable to get outside clearance with his crime.

End of discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to grant parole (JG-RS). Motion prevails by a 11-2 vote. Members voting in favor of this motion are Mr. Coates, Mr. Delgado, Ms. Globokar, Ms. Goff, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Miller, Chairman Shelton, Ms. Shoffner, Ms. Terrones, Ms. Tison, and Mr. Tupy. Mr. Bohland, and Mr. Grubbs dissented.

After a complete review of Mr. Darron Jackson's case, and after giving thoughtful discussion



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and consideration to all factors, the Board decided and voted to grant parole to Mr. Darron Jackson, subject to conditions of parole release as set by the Board and by law. The Board hereby finds that Mr. Darron Jackson is an appropriate candidate for parole release.

“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.”