



STATE OF ILLINOIS
JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD

***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION- April 23, 2026

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 1001 N. Walnut Street, Springfield, Illinois, on April 23, 2026, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following individuals in custody:

R66424	Simmons, Marshall* (Youthful Parole)
C81714	Bell, Rudy* (Indeterminate)

**Cook County Case*

The meeting was called to order by Matthew Coates, Board Member.

Roll call was taken by Recording Secretary Ellen Wayne.

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Mr. Jared Bohland	X	
Ms. Tracy Buckley		X
Mr. Matthew Coates	X	
Mr. Jeffrey Grubbs	X	
Mr. Rodger Heaton	X	
Ms. Holly Lemons	X	
Ms. Robin Shoffner	X	
Ms. Carmen Terrones	X	
Mr. Kenneth Tupy	X	

8 Members Present

1 Members Absent

The Board heard the case of Marshall Simmons R66424 and Rudy Bell C81714.

Open Session: RHEATON-KTUPY

Meeting was adjourned by: RSHOFFNER-JBOHLAND



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EN BANC MINUTE SHEET
OPEN SESSION- April 23, 2026

Individual in Custody's Name: Simmons, Marshall* IDOC Number: R66424

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 1001 N. Walnut Street, Springfield, Illinois, on April 23, 2026, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Marshall Simmons R66424.

Members present were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Lemons, Ms. Shoffner, Ms. Terrones, and Mr. Tupy.

Recording Secretary: Ellen Wayne

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

On March 31, 2026, Mr. Marshall Simmons #R66424, was interviewed by Ms. Holly Lemons via Webex at Illinois River Correctional Center. Mr. Simmons was present with his attorney, Ms. Lia Raves. Also present for the interview was former Correctional Officer at Menard Correctional Center, Ms. Misty New, Clinical & Forensic Psychologist Dr. Zoe Leibowitz, and Ms. Jessie Schrantz, LCSW with Illinois Prison Project. Mr. Simmons is currently classified as minimum security, as A grade and has no escape risk.

Mr. Simmons has been in custody since he was 15 years old and he is currently 36 years old. He was sentenced to 47 years in 2007 and re-sentenced to 25 years for first degree murder and six years for armed robbery to be served concurrently in a 2024 third stage post-conviction claim. He has served 21 years of this sentence and has a scheduled Mandatory Supervised Release date of December 22, 2029. At his resentencing, 25 years was agreed upon with the State with the understanding that he would be considered for Youthful Parole after serving 20 years.

Mr. Simmons was engaged, and presented himself as an insightful, articulate young man. When describing himself as the person that came into the Illinois Department of Corrections compared to now, he stated things like, "I was very immature. I was a follower. I was trying to fit in and doing things to be cool to others. The man I am today I think before I act. I can see that my actions impact those around me. I am a complete 180 from the person I was then and the situation I put myself in. In prison you want to put up a tough image, the 15-year-old me, would have really cared about what others thought about me. Today, I do not care what my peers think about me. I stay away from those with negative influences."

When asked what has been most impactful to him since his incarceration, he recounted his participation in the Restorative Justice Program, stating, "It made me think about Steven and the impact it had on his loved ones. It is something that does not leave you; it sticks with you." He also shared that the Man-to-Man Mentorship Program was impactful in teaching him to be responsible and always hold yourself accountable. Mr. Simmons added that "Accountability early on in my incarceration, I did not know what that meant. Going through this program and hearing their take aways, really showed me what



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that was. When we talked about the decision, I made that day, I didn't understand how that would affect Steven's family or my family. I am not proud of that. I'm really sorry for that and for being the reason that he's not here."

Officer Misty New testified in part that Mr. Simmons was very, very young when she first met him. He came in with a large sentence and was put in one of the hardest cell houses at Menard due to his age and sentence. He did not fit in with that cell house because his manner and demeanor did not go with the environment he was in. She added that she kind of took him under her wing and helped him along. Ms. New said she helped him get jobs and he always did so good and was able to get better jobs. Other individuals in custody liked him. Correctional people liked him. He was just a good person. He kind of found his place, he did not want trouble, so he stayed away from trouble. He wanted to do better so he did better.

Dr. Leibowitz testified that Mr. Simmons was at a low risk of recidivating. She stated that his re-entry plan into a structured environment versus within a community setting, such as family, lessens the likelihood of reoffending.

Ms. Jessie Schrantz testified that she has worked closely with Mr. Simmons for about ten months. She described him as a very curious person and wants to take in as many perspectives as possible. She shared that Illinois Prison Project can work directly with St. Leonard's to support individual needs as well as offering complete wraparound services. She noted that Mr. Simmons has great family support and she states that they have learned about developing relationships as adults and they understand they will have to re-learn each other. He is excited to have a career that connects him to his family, with a Commercial Driver's License.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Records reflect that on March 28, 2005, Mr. Simmons and two co-defendants planned a robbery. At the time, Mr. Simmons' girlfriend, who was 13 years old, Kahla Mitchell, met the victim while Mr. Simmons, the other co-defendant and his older cousin, Mr. Eduain Foster, hid. The original statement of facts states that the co-defendant, 19 years old, ordered the victim to remove his tennis shoes. He then pulled out a gun and demanded money. When Mr. Simmons saw this, he told the co-defendant to put the gun away. When the co-defendant would not, the defendant, Mr. Simmons, ran to the car. While he was running away, he heard a gunshot and the victim died from a singular gunshot wound. There are inconsistencies in the letter of protest filed by the Cook County State's Attorney Office, these statements are in the reverse, in that Simmons was the shooter, not Mr. Foster.

Ms. Mitchell was not charged.

Mr. Foster was offered a plea in exchange for his testimony against Mr. Simmons and was sentenced to four years.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

There is no other criminal history to be discussed.



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INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Simmons has worked numerous jobs during his incarceration. After two years of incarceration at Menard Correctional Center, Mr. Simmons became a porter. Throughout his time at Menard Correctional Center, he continued to earn the trust of the staff and was continuously recommended for additional job opportunities such as dietary, laundry, housing. From 2019 to 2025, Mr. Simmons held jobs for over three years at Hill Correctional Center. Additionally, during that time, he completed a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) exam, several college courses, and participated in therapeutic mentorship programming. Mr. Simmons is currently working as a Housing Unit Specialist. He has been holding this job since June 19, 2025. Additionally, he has enrolled in college courses and is one of four people at Illinois River Correctional Center to be enrolled in the CAT Simulator Program to become a certified Hydraulic Excavator Operator through Caterpillar. Throughout his time, he has earned 14 certificates of completion, noting that until he was transferred to Hill Correctional Center, educational opportunities were limited due to the facility and time Mr. Simmons had to serve.

Regarding institutional disciplinary tickets, Mr. Simmons has done remarkably well. Throughout 21 years of incarceration, he has had a total of ten infractions. Of these, eight were major and two were minor tickets. His last disciplinary ticket was November 30, 2023. Mr. Simmons has taken accountability for each of these incidents. Notably, most of these tickets were early in his time with Department of Corrections.

Mr. Simmons noted that it was a huge adjustment for him to come into the Illinois Department of Corrections, and the environment was violent and aggressive. He notes that "I made some mistakes along the way. It has not been perfect; I can tell you that." Mr. Simmons stated that he did his best to stay out of trouble and do the right things, adding it has impacted him in a huge way, his family, the shame that he put on my family. Mr. Simmons stated that this is a position that he never wants to be in again, adding that he will never put himself in a position to do anything like this again. Mr. Simmons stated that Steven did not deserve this either and he realizes he did not get to do that either. Mr. Simmons said that he has taken a lot away from this experience and it will stick with him.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. Simmons stated he was dating a young lady that day and it was his actions that led to Steven's death. He had the opportunity to stop the actions that day, and he did not do it and is so sorry about that. When she said, "do you want to make some money," she began to say he was weak. He ultimately agreed to go along with the robbery. He called his co-defendant and asked if he had a gun. He said yes but would only let them use it if he could participate. Kayla called Steven and told him to meet him at her grandma's house. He arrived and said they started taking his possessions. He thought they were just going to take his things and run away. He could not imagine what Steven was feeling at that time. He did not go there with the intent for anyone to die and thought they were just going to run away. Mr. Foster leaned back and shot him and stated they ran away. He stated he felt horrible about what happened; he did not deserve that, and he would not be here, and he would still be here.



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PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Simmons has multiple sources of support when it comes to housing, employment, continuing education, mental health, and case management. He will immediately parole to St. Leonard's Ministries in Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Simmons' parents live in Lansing, Illinois, approximately 30 miles from St. Leonard's. Mr. Simmons and his parents intend to see each other every day if possible. St. Leonard's offers a scaffolded programming which allows for participants to intentionally adjust to their new environment. The program is run in five phases which Mr. Simmons can progress through.

Mr. Simmons has been active in his own reentry planning. He has prepared for his own reentry by utilizing resources available through his friends and family, private companies such as Edovo and mail correspondence, and Illinois Department of Corrections. He has also worked closely with Ms. Jessie Schrantz to create a Reentry and Preparation Plan. The plan has detailed wrap around services available for Mr. Simmons. In addition to the support he will receive from Illinois Prison Project, Mr. Simmons has received letters of support from six other re-entry organizations.

Mr. Simmons shared some of his strategies for release, which included surrounding himself with people that want to see him succeed. He stated he would be going back into a society that has changed so much, and he was a child when he left. He plans to lean into his family. St. Leonard's has a leveled program, and he likes that. He shared plans that he has for himself such as he started studying for the trucking industry. He added start now, so you are not scrambling and if you rush into things, that is when things can go wrong.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

Cook County State's Attorney's Office has filed a letter of opposition.

ENBANC HISTORY

This is Mr. Simmons' first time in front of the Board for parole consideration.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Lia Raves, Mr. Simmons' attorney, stated it has been an honor to be on behalf of him. She asked everyone in attendance at the hearing to stand if they were there to support his release. She then shared something that stood out to her when she met him. She stated he has earnestness for his release and others believe in his success because they can see his desire. He has a long list of accomplishments since his incarceration and stated his case stands out because people that oversee him think strongly about supporting him. She stated they even signed a petition with their badge numbers to release him. She stated he has a desire to work hard and separate himself from the bad. She stated that him being at Menard Correctional Center at such a young age shows his dedication and he feels the full weight of the victim's death. She stated he can tell you about the severe remorse he feels. She stated there have been several risk assessments that have been done on him and every assessment stated he is at a low risk of reoffending.



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Dr. Leibowitz, Forensic and Clinical Psychologist, shared where she obtained her education and master's degree. She stated she focuses on violent risk assessments and has worked in a forensic psychiatric hospital. She stated she handled mental health medication with individuals with disciplinary infractions and decided if their mental health status affected that. She stated she interviewed him for three and a half hours, reviewed a lot of his records, and administered two risk assessments with one being for violence due to the nature of his offense. She stated he is at a low risk of re-offending again. She said there were a couple of risks that were medium, but it was because of the crime and his age. She stated he could not have done anything to decrease that. She stated another medium risk factor was due to peers. She stated it is unique to his environment as he has been in custody and not in society. She stated his family does not have criminal backgrounds therefore, they can provide the stability he will need. She stated his reentry plan is very solid.

Mr. Simmons stated he has been waiting for this opportunity and the victim's family did not deserve this and his actions are something he will never be proud of. He stated he is responsible for Steven's death, and he regrets his actions. He made a horrible decision at 15 years old, and he did not consider the worst thing that could happen. He stated his choices hurt not only Steven and his family but his family as well. He stated if he could go back and do things differently he would. Today he asks the Board for a chance. He stated he has been living in a way that is positive and productive. He believes he can contribute to society in a meaningful way, and he thanked all the resources that have been helping him. He stated he completes his work assignments and is always respectful to the staff. He stated he will stick to his reentry plan and use the support he has. He would like to go to trucking school for his Commercial Driver's License. He stated if given the opportunity today, he will not let them down.

Ms. Raves stated he entered into prison when he was 15 years old and today, he is a 36-year-old adult. She stated he has served a significant sentence, and he has served more time in custody than he has lived in society. She stated he can build a career and family, and the community will benefit by having him in it.

Mr. Bohland questioned the 2024 resentencing and if it was a plea deal. Ms. Raves stated yes, he took responsibility for the crime. Mr. Bohland then questioned Ms. Raves whether he acknowledged that he was the shooter. She stated he has stuck by the fact he was not the shooter.

Mr. Tupy asked for clarification on the ticket in 2023 regarding gang activity. Ms. Raves stated this was about eating cake that they share with each other. She stated someone offered him cake and he accepted it, but he was not aware it was from a gang. She stated that correctional officers have admitted to eating the cake as well. She stated he understands that he should have been more careful about the cake.

Mr. Grubbs questioned how many times Dr. Leibowitz met with Mr. Simmons. Dr. Leibowitz stated she believes they met three times. Mr. Grubbs stated he wants to hear about the areas of concern for his release. Dr. Leibowitz stated it is challenging for someone to be detained for so many years without having any tickets or infractions. She stated there are infractions that do not lead to legal action. She discusses the most recent ticket for a large gathering, and she stated in the community it does not matter but inside a prison it is a safety concern. She stated the more concerning tickets were at the beginning of his incarceration and he was very forthcoming and honest about his tickets. She stated he has made



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mistakes and did not always make the right choices, and he has learned from those mistakes. She stated the areas of concern would be if he was not able to have prosocial skills. She stated his current environment is being around others with a criminal history. She stated St. Leonard's has others similar to him and come with a risk due to freedom and liberties.

Mr. Grubbs verified that the environment would be her only concern, and she stated yes.

Mr. Tupy questioned whether he was acting under peer pressure. Ms. Raves stated his cousin was the one that fired the gun and that was discussed at his resentencing.

Mr. Grubbs questioned Ms. Raves about whether she read the transcripts and what the Judge considered at his resentencing. Ms. Raves stated the Judge said he would be eligible for Youthful Parole with his 25-year sentence.

Ms. Courtney Quam, Cook County's Assistant State's Attorney, opposes the granting of parole in this case. She stated he has not come to full insight with the murder that he committed. She discusses the statement of facts that states he shot the victim. She stated him coming in front of the Board, blaming it on his cousin and letting a 13-year-old set it up is not showing remorse. She stated this was a murder over a pair of Jordan's and a cellphone. She stated his age was considered at the resentencing and there is no evidence that he has any serious mental health conditions that caused this. She stated that trial court acknowledgment of parole does not mean that he should be given parole.

Mr. Raves stated what happened was tragic and Mr. Simmons is the first person to admit that. She stated he has maintained he was not the shooter so he should not have to say he was. She then discusses his institutional hearing and the remorse he carries. She stated the resentencing judge expected him to be able to see the Board.

Dr. Leibowitz stated when she was conducting risk assessments on him, it was conducted as if he was the shooter.

Mr. Heaton questioned Ms. Quam what the evidence was that he was the shooter. Ms. Quam stated Mr. Foster testified that Mr. Simmons was the shooter and stated there was testimony from others regarding the cellphone that was taken from the victim. Mr. Heaton questioned if there were witnesses that saw him shoot the victim. Ms. Quam stated she does not believe this parole hearing is appropriate to relitigate the evidence.

Mr. Heaton questioned Ms. Raves about what has changed since 2024 that the judge was not aware of. Ms. Raves stated he has continued to grow and educate himself. She then listed what types of courses and programming he has taken and completed. She stated the risk assessment was also done after resentencing along with his St. Leonard's reentry plan.

Mr. Grubbs acknowledged the support he has and stated if he does not get out today, he will be soon, and it will be because of his support.



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Dr. Leibowitz stated in the way she conducts the assessment, it is based off his conviction and accountability. She discusses how the brain is not fully developed at the age he committed the crime, and he did not understand the impact of his actions. She stated when she spoke with him about the events that led him to where he is today, he had a deep and thorough appreciation of the lives of other people. He took full accountability for his actions that resulted in a life being lost. He showed notable and genuine emotion when talking about that. She stated he acknowledged the actions he took when he was younger, and he presents at low risk.

Mr. Coates discusses the clinical overview that stated he can go to a reentry program if not release today.

End of discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (HLEMONS-JBOHLAND). Motion prevailed by a 5-3 vote. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Lemons and Mr. Tupy. Mr. Grubbs, Ms. Shoffner and Ms. Terrones dissented.

After reviewing the 15 Statutory Factors and applying them to the evidence in this case, the Board decided that Mr. Marshall Simmons should be denied parole.

“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.”



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EN BANC MINUTE SHEET
OPEN SESSION- April 23, 2026

Individual in Custody's Name: Bell, Rudy* IDOC Number: C81714

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 1001 N. Walnut Street, Springfield, Illinois, on April 23, 2026, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Rudy Bell C81714.

Members present were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Lemons, Ms. Shoffner, Ms. Terrones, and Mr. Tupy.

Recording Secretary: Ellen Wayne

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

On March 5, 2026, Mr. Rudy Bell C81714 was interviewed from Hill Correctional Center via Webex by Board Member Ms. Carmen Terrones. He was accompanied by Ms. Angela Bell, his daughter, Ms. Jessie Schrantz, social worker, Ms. Sophia Goebel, Program Director, Mr. Anthony Jones from St. Leonard's Ministries, Mr. John Hersey, Director from IMAN and his counsel, Ms. Nadia Woods with the Illinois Prison Project.

Mr. Bell presented well, was pleasant, not boastful and was eager to update the Board on his consistent progress and sharing additional testimonials of his contributions, consistent practice demonstrating rehabilitation in action, along with the punishment of close to 50 years served for the crime he is charged with.

Mr. Bell is serving a 100-to-200-year sentence given on May 12, 1978, as the result of a 1977 conviction out of Cook County for Murder.

Mr. Bell's current date for Mandatory Supervised Release is February 25, 2068, with a Maximum Discharge Date of February 25, 2071. He was 25 years old at the time of the offense and is currently 74 years old having served 49 years in custody.

Mr. Bell presents with many individuals providing testimonials of the value he brought, brings and will prospectively give to many others. During the interview, the testimonials from his daughter, and two returning citizens accompanied him to think differently, to find themselves and think for themselves was powerful and attest to how he is taking the negative culture of a gang leader to a culture of encouraging and directing returning citizens to personal sovereignty.

Ms. Angela Bell, who grew up with a father behind bars first and foremost, addressed the sorrow of the victims of this crime and at no time did she minimize the loss, understanding the innocent position her father maintains. She was not "dismissing any harm of the past" adding that she "has carried that pain." She is not here to argue the facts she is here to share with the public her love for her father and how that will support safety for community and attention to her father's needs. She respects the criminal



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justice process and knows her father has done his job during the majority of years incarcerated to be restored as a useful citizen. Illinois Department of Corrections has redirected his behavior. He is practicing values to promote wellbeing for everyone. She presented herself as an amazing daughter and citizen, honoring the victims, understanding her father's past and his embracing of a gang culture in his past. She can acknowledge her father is a changed man and consistently demonstrating the change through improved choices.

Mr. John Hersey, Manager and Director of Housing at IMAN (Inner-City Muslim Action Network), for past six years was previously incarcerated with Mr. Bell. He attributes his personal journey to Mr. Bell channeling his skills, knowledge and time for the good of humanity by accompanying other returning citizens behind bars and in the free world. He describes Mr. Bell as a man who has seen many things, a lot of experiences and desires to do better and is doing better. Mr. Hersey is a better man in this world because of Mr. Bell. Mr. Hersey holds an important role as Assistant Director of IMAN agency, the agency that accompanies many returning citizens. Mr. Bell took Mr. Hersey out of the dark into the light and for that mentoring Mr. Hersey will be forever grateful. Ms. Terrones stated that all in this room would welcome someone like Mr. Hersey to speak of them in the graceful manner of how his life was impacted by Mr. Bell. His commitment is to support Mr. Bell as needed and knowing the value Mr. Bell can bring to others to make informed and better choices/decisions.

Mr. Anthony Jones is the Director of Housing Programming with St. Leonards' Ministries. Mr. Bell's past was a time when he was dedicated to ideas that were distorted. Mr. Bell has set a foundation for rehabilitation, has consistently maintained practices associated with a change mindset and will sustain his informed change with Mr. Jones' consistent support. Mr. Jones attributes his walking a straight line to Mr. Bell, if it was not for his guidance and unconditional accompaniment, he may not be sitting in a critical decision-making role today with St. Leonard's for close to 20 years. Mr. Bell disrupted Mr. Jones' destructive decision patterns by restoring his confidence and redirecting his choices to informed choices that would eventually set his release from prison.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Records reflect that during the early morning hours of April 2, 1977, Mr. Tyrone Smith, victim, drove to the airport to meet his aunt. He was accompanied by his mother as well as his girlfriend, Ms. LaDonna Dixon, and her child. They arrived at Smith's house at 7948 S. Union Ave in Chicago, Illinois, at approximately 2:30 a.m. While standing in front of his house, Mr. Smith shouted to the driver of an approaching car to turn on the car's headlights. At this point, four men exited the approaching car and shot and killed Mr. Tyrone Smith.

At trial, Ms. Lucille Faulker testified her son, Mr. Tyrone Smith, was shot and killed in front of her home at approximately 2:30 a.m. on April 2, 1977. As Mr. Faulkner and Mr. Smith were getting out of their car, another car approached with its headlights off. Mr. Faulkner heard Mr. Smith shout at the occupants of that car to turn its headlights on, then she heard gunshots. She did not see who shot her son.

Ms. Audrianna Thomas testified that she and a friend named Mr. Robert Anderson went for a drive around midnight on the night of the shooting. Mr. Anderson drove to Union Ave around 2:30 a.m. and told Ms. Thomas that he was going somewhere to gamble. Ms. Thomas followed him as she got out



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of the car and told Mr. Anderson that she wanted to go home. When Mr. Smith pulled his car up in front of his house, Ms. Thomas looked to see who was there. The dome light in the car went on when the doors were opened and the street was well-lit. Ms. Thomas recognized Mr. Smith, whom she knew as “Mouse,” and Ms. LaDonna Dixon. Ms. Thomas’ attention was drawn to another car when she heard someone say, “Hey, man, turn your lights on.” Ms. Thomas thought Mr. Smith was the one who made the statement. The darkened car pulled alongside Mr. Smith’s car, and four men exited. One man ran around the front of Smith’s car, and the other three men ran around the rear. Ms. Thomas saw guns go off. The man who ran around the front of Mr. Smith’s car was holding “a rifle or shotgun” or a “long-barreled gun.” Ms. Thomas knew this man as “Bimbo.” When asked to identify Bimbo in court, Thomas identified Mr. Bell.

Ms. Thomas saw Mr. Miller, whom she identified in court, “running from the car without lights on” carrying “a long-barreled gun.” Ms. Thomas testified that she did not personally know the petitioner or Mr. Miller but that she had seen them around over the past few years. She learned Mr. Bell and Mr. Miller’s names approximately one year before the trial. Ms. Thomas did not recognize the other two men who came from the blue car, but they “looked like they were carrying handguns.” After the shooting started, Ms. Thomas saw Mr. Smith fall to the ground, and her friend pushed her down. She heard a car “skid off” but saw nothing else. Ms. Thomas and Mr. Anderson left Union Ave shortly after the shooting, and Ms. Thomas did not call the police.

Mr. Bell was convicted of a subsequent offense to the murder crime; there was an attempt on the life of the eyewitness Ms. Audrianna Thomas, instead her sister was murdered, and the police classified her murder by mistaking the victim, Ms. Rowena James, as the witness, her sister. The other members of the gang were charged and convicted of her murder and not petitioner.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Rudy Bell has a lengthy criminal history including over 30 prior arrests under numerous aliases in the eight years leading up to the holding murder conviction. These include five previous arrests for murder or attempted murder for which he was found either not guilty, or charges were dismissed or not prosecuted. Other arrests include four for intimidation, eight for battery or aggravated battery, five for robbery or armed robbery, six for unlawful use of a weapon, and others for attempt burglary, criminal damage, criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, and possession of cannabis. This holding murder charge is the first conviction where he received prison time.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

The tickets Mr. Bell has accumulated throughout the fifty years are over 100 and the most recent in 2023. The ticket is not violence related and refers to not following policy and created his own practice to meet his need, of making a phone call when he should not have made a call.

Mr. Bell has not received a disciplinary ticket in three years. In the past five years, he has received tickets in only three instances, which are discussed thoroughly below. While Mr. Bell received frequent tickets in his early years within Illinois Department of Corrections, his recent disciplinary history is additional evidence of his faith-driven transformation toward accountability and peace. Mr. Bell accepts responsibility for his tickets.



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On April 22, 2022, he received a ticket for unauthorized movement and abuse of privileges for using the phones to which he received a verbal reprimand.

On May 18, 2022, he received a ticket for unauthorized movement. Mr. Bell was written a ticket for attempting to use the shower when it was not his turn. He was about to use the shower, on this 70-degree day, as a way to cool down while he was overheating in his cell. Mr. Bell has taken accountability for this action and has since requested permission when needing shower access due to overheating. He received one month C Grade for this ticket.

In April of 2023, he received another ticket for unauthorized movement for making a phone call during the time that was allowed for showering. He received one week of day room restriction.

Mr. Bell during his interview, affirmed he is not associated with any gang. He stated that he left that life behind and his petition is consistent in communicating disassociation with the gang. There is no official Illinois Department of Corrections process pursued by Mr. Bell. He renounced his gang affiliation in the late 1980s in prison and shared his disassociation with the warden, correctional staff and anyone who would listen. This was over 40 years ago according to petition and the petitioner.

He was not charged with the murder of the witness' sister. His Illinois Department of Corrections journey reflects and shows awareness, the change, the action he has taken to redirect the influence he can have on humans' struggling and compromising their success of wellbeing. He knows his behaviors as a gang member were not honorable and therefore, he has chosen to share his experiences/story with others the consequences they will face if they do not redirect their negative choices.

From securing his General Educational Development (GED), he intentionally and consistently immersed himself in what Illinois Department of Corrections has made available to access and has not turned back from consuming knowledge to skills, to putting into practicing this knowledge and skills towards supporting change.

Mr. Bell's participation in the Legacy Program in 2023 and more recently Edovo courses in 2026 have given him space to reflect on his past actions outside of the parole process. He was on the honor quarters while at Stateville.

He has held employment, and employment is limited based on his sentence and how Illinois Department of Corrections assigns opportunities.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

There is no version but his claim of innocence. In a previous En Banc hearing, he stated he was in another place such as a party in Wisconsin with the co-defendant.



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PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Bell plans to live in transitional housing at St. Leonard's Ministries, an organization that has supported individuals in their re-entry journeys for almost seven years and has a track record of success. As Ms. Schrantz noted in her letter, the difficulty of returning home from prison after almost fifty years cannot be overstated. No matter the level of preparation, unexpected challenges will always arise and will require both the individual and their support system to be adaptive and resilient. With the foundation of St. Leonard's as Mr. Bell's housing plan, it allows him the freedom to adapt and respond to these challenges without the threat of housing instability.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

Cook County Assistant State's Attorney opposes by a letter submitted April 2026.

ENBANC HISTORY

The first year of consideration for parole was in 1986. Mr. Bell has come in front of the Board 28 times at En Banc prior to today. Mr. Bell received a 2-year set in 1995. He received a 3-year set in 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013.

The Prisoner Review Board has voted unanimously to deny parole until August of 2020.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Nadia Woods, Mr. Bell's attorney, questioned Ms. Terrones if there were victim protest to which she stated yes, there was.

Ms. Woods asked anyone that is here in person to support Mr. Bell to please stand. She stated there is family, reentry support from St. Leonard's along with mentees, peers, and violence prevention. She stated she had spent four years getting to know him and that he is soft-spoken and wildly intelligent. She explained how he has been in front of the Board nearly 30 times and this is the first time he can be present during his hearing. She stated he is nervous but grateful. She stated the only thing she would like to provide context on is his gang involvement. She explained how he was a very young 14-year-old when he was in a gang, and he did it to protect himself and his community.

Ms. Woods asked Mr. Bell to share how it makes him feel seeing all the support here today. Mr. Bell started off by thanking the Board for the opportunity to speak with them today. He stated it has been a humbling experience and at the time, he did not realize this would affect others. He thanked everyone who is there in support of him. He stated it has been a long time, and he has had plenty of time to think about his actions years ago. He really wished his life and his family's life could have been different and he is terribly sorry for the incident that happened.

Ms. Woods asked Mr. Bell if there is something specific he would like to share with the Board.



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Mr. Bell stated he has grown a lot. He stated once he got to prison, reality hit him, and he knew he had to change his ways. He sees what is on the news about gang violence and he would like to help with that. He stated he is a man of good faith, and he wants to help.

Mr. Samuel Young, retired police officer, stated he was born and raised on the south side of Chicago, and he had a working mother and father. He stated he is the oldest of five children and shared his background with Cook County Sheriff's Office that started in 1978. He stated he has also been a correctional officer, and he has spent 48 years in law enforcement. He stated he has always been active in the community, and he has a compassion for law enforcement and giving back to the community. He stated Mr. Bell has a story to tell and the older guys need to help guide the younger community.

Ms. Woods asked Mr. Young to share his background in working with gang activity. Mr. Young stated he was assigned and then promoted to which still exists today. He stated he knows what Mr. Bell did at 25 years old, but he is now 75 years old. He stated the gangs work together to fight different blocks. He explained that the gang Mr. Bell was involved in years ago, does not exist anymore and the younger gangs do not care.

Ms. Woods asked Mr. Young to share about gang intelligence. Mr. Young stated he learned the structure and how they operate. He stated it would be effective to get the younger people to speak with the older individuals.

Ms. Woods asked Mr. Bell to speak on what he has worked on for his rehabilitation. Mr. Bell stated he has been helping other guys stay out of trouble, stay focused, and stay away from drugs. He stated he stays stuck in his religion and that keeps him focused.

Mr. Bohland questioned his last post-conviction from his last interview in 2023. Ms. Woods stated that his co-defendant started that claim, not him. She explained that Mr. Miller wanted to appeal it and there has not been anything filed since then.

Ms. Shoffner questioned how many people were convicted and if they were still serving time. Ms. Woods stated that three people were convicted and one of them is still incarcerated.

Mr. Grubbs questioned if she reviewed the transcripts from his prosecution. Ms. Woods stated it was a Rico charge. Mr. Grubbs then questioned the testimony of the others. Ms. Woods stated there is not any because they all plead guilty.

Ms. Terrones wanted to confirm that the co-defendant was released in 2019. Ms. Woods stated yes.

Ms. Courtney Quam, Cook County's Assistant State's Attorney, opposes the granting of parole. She stated he continues to claim he is innocent and has refused to take responsibility for the crime. She stated the man was killed in front of his family and he should not be granted parole when he cannot take responsibility for his actions. She stated he should not be mentoring young people when he cannot admit to what he has done. She stated he still holds a position of power with the gang and he never formally



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renounced. She stated he refuses to take accountability for the witness intimidation that led to another person being murdered. She stated his release would cause further harm.

Ms. Woods stated the protest letter listed all the disciplinary infractions of his entire incarceration, but he has not received a major ticket in over two years. She stated he refuses to be dishonest to the Board and that it would not be fair of her to ask. She stated the work that he has done to become a different man shows.

Ms. Quam questioned Ms. Woods if she submitted her supplement to Cook County State's Attorney Office to which Ms. Woods stated no.

End of Discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to grant parole (CTERRONES-RSHOFFNER). Motion failed by a 3-5 vote. Members voting in a favor were Mr. Grubbs, Ms. Shoffner and Ms. Terrones. Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Lemons and Mr. Tupy dissented.

After reviewing the 15 Statutory Factors and applying them to the evidence in this case, the Board decided that Mr. Rudy Bell should be denied parole.

"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."