



STATE OF ILLINOIS
JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD

***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION- August 21, 2025

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 1001 N. Walnut Street, Springfield, Illinois, on August 21, 2025, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following individuals in custody:

K56687	Watkins, Eric* (Parole Eligible)
R41176	Coleman, Jonathan (Youthful Parole)
S03263	Furrell, Carl (Youthful Parole)
R40850	Wideman, Lawrence (Youthful Parole)

**denotes Cook County Case*

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

Roll call was taken by Recording Secretary Ellen Wayne.

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Mr. Jared Bohland	X	
Mr. Matthew Coates	X	
Ms. Julie Globokar	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	

9 Members Present

0 Members Absent

The Board heard the case of Eric Watkins K56687, Jonathan Coleman R41176, Carl Furrell S03263, and Lawrence Wideman R40850.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL for 05-29-2025 & 6-26-2025: JGRUBBS-RHEATON

Open Session: RSHOFFNER-JGRUBBS

Meeting was adjourned by: RSHOFFNER-MCOATES



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EN BANC MINUTE SHEET
OPEN SESSION- August 21, 2025

Individual in Custody's Name: Eric Watkins* IDOC Number: K56687

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 1001 N. Walnut Street, Springfield, Illinois, on August 21, 2025, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Eric Watkins K56687.

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

Recording Secretary: Ellen Wayne

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

On July 02, 2025, Board Member Ms. Carmen Terrones, interviewed Mr. Eric Watkins via Webex at Danville Correctional Center. The interview took three hours to hear and confirm all of Mr. Watkins' transformations and claim of innocence. Mr. Watkins was accompanied by an engaged, emotional, and enthusiastic witnesses sharing their individual experience with him and their respect, care for his truth, and love. Present during the interview was Ms. Michelle Mbekeani, Mr. Watkins' pro bona attorney, Mr. Tremayne Simpson, who is Mr. Watkins' brother, Ms. Christina Rivers, Ph.D., professor at DePaul University, Pastor Mr. Roy McMillian, future employer and mentor, and Senator Ms. Rachel Ventura supporting a member of her district and contributor to her work. Mr. Watkins was engaging, eager to share individual transformation and desire to contribute his knowledge and experience to the larger communities and direct about his innocence regarding the committing offences.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The victim, Rufus Simpson, was 42 years of age at the time of his death. He lived at 4815 West Haddon Street Chicago, with his wife, Elaine Simpson and their children. Eric Watkins, his stepson, was one of the three children that lived with Rufus and Elaine. Eric was upset with his stepfather, and he thought that Rufus was not treating his mother well. Elaine Simpson did not have any complaint about Rufus and testified at the trial that Rufus treated her well and that they were happily married.

In October 1992, Eric Watkins began recruiting his friends to kill Rufus Simpson. Eric recruited Donell Austin, Bobbie Walley, and Jamell Dorrough. A .22 caliber rifle was supplied by Bobbie Walley. Eric told the three conspirators that they could have whatever property they wanted from the house.

On November 15, 1992, the four met at Bobbie Walley's house at 368 North Pulaski Street Chicago. Watkins left and called his house to make sure the victim was alone at his home. They traveled in Watkins' car to 4815 West Haddon Street. Watkins went into the house first and then signaled Austin, Walley, and Dorrough to enter.



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Austin forced the victim to the basement at gunpoint and had him lay face down on the basement floor. Walley and Watkins began gathering property. Watkins told Walley to tell Austin to shoot his stepfather. Austin shot Rufus Simpson in the back of the head. He was told to shoot again, but the gun jammed. Austin brought the gun upstairs where Walley, Dorrough, and Watkins helped Austin unjam the gun.

Watkins and Austin returned to the basement and Austin shot Rufus in the head a second time.

The four defendants took a color television, a video cassette recorder, a tape deck, a keyboard and a Nintendo game from the residence.

The defendants Donell Austin and Bobbie Walley were arrested on January 27, 1993. They both confessed to their participation in the crime and gave handwritten statements to an Assistant State's Attorney.

Records reflect, in part, that the petitioner: *put a great deal of premeditation and planning into this murder. He spent weeks consulting his friends about how to commit this murder. He eventually rounded up the codefendants and drove them to the victim's home and ordered the murder. This defendant is a cold blooded, calculating and diabolical individual who should never see the light of day.*

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Watkins presents with no prior arrest or convictions.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Watkins' institutional adjustment is beyond remarkable. He contributes to the development of self and others. He also sets his sights on acquiring knowledge to contribute to the overall good of our society by focusing on specific populations with intention. He has a supportive, loving, significant accompaniment and great number of family/community support who accompany like family.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Eric Watkins claims innocence to the statement of facts. He did not pull trigger or elicit people to commit murder and he did not take his own property. He takes accountability of compassion to his family loss and his absence from them. He states he did not know his noted co-defendants personally. He has an alibi and witnesses.

He was not initially charged with the offense then charged later with a bond increase. His co-defendants were the witness against him, and they received deals for their testimony.

The documentation submitted testifies that two polygraph tests were conducted and both readings returned as "no deception indicated" but the results were not disclosed until 1997.



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Mr. Watkins had two codefendants. Mr. Donnell Austin was convicted of murdering Rufus Simpson by shooting him twice, found eligible for the death penalty but sentenced to 21 years in prison and released in 2015 after serving 22 years. Conviction was secured by testimony of Jamel Dorrough who became a State witness after making a deal to testify against his co-defendants in exchange of a lighter sentence for his participation in the crime. Mr. Dorrough testified and received a sentence of 14 years in prison. Mr. Walley was convicted under an accountability theory on all charges: conspiracy, residential burglary, armed robbery, first-degree murder, ordering Austin to shoot Simpson, and concealing the homicide as a burglary. Mr. Walley, who had prior felony convictions, was found eligible for death penalty and received a 17-year sentence and was released in 2010.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Watkins plans to reside at First Followers Re-entry Program or First Steps residence in Champaign, Illinois. He received a formal offer. He will have his own room, shared amenities and intensive case management services tailored for individuals who have served lengthy sentences. He will also be given a community navigator who supports basic documentation needs and navigating services in community.

He plans to work remotely with Pastor McMillian's church as The Director of the Father's Bridge program. The program aims to strengthen family bonds, reduce generational trauma, and build pathways to reconciliation and social reintegration. He has another job opportunity that is The Firehouse from Pastor Phil Jackson at the Firehouse Community Arts Center of Chicago. He plans to continue his education through practicing his learning and pursuing formal education as presented or needed. He presently has a master's degree in Restorative Justice Ministry from North Park University and graduated with honors. Mr. Watkins will have his family and community support that will show up for his successful reintegration to the free world. If you reference all the letters from notable community folks and family, you can see there is no excuse for Mr. Watkins not to have someone to turn to during the great experiences and struggling experiences in life.

Mr. Watkins' medical and mental health needs will be covered by the medical card and medical coverage by his employers. He is scheduled to receive trauma informed counseling/therapy from First Followers partner clinics. He understands the value of talk therapy and how it supports maintenance and sustainability of wellbeing. He will secure all the needed documents to support his blueprint towards success from the many supporting agencies and family. He also plans to continue with his art and poetry.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

Cook County Assistant State's Attorney submitted a written objection and appeared in person.

ENBANC HISTORY

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



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DISCUSSION

Mr. Eric Watkins started off thanking the Board for this opportunity and he thanked everyone who was in person for their support. Mr. Watkins stated he thinks about what his life has been while incarcerated, his purpose, passion and pursuit. He was sentenced to natural life at 22 years old in Stateville Correctional Center where he was chained at the wrists and ankles. He explained how his own life was a trigger to him and his stepfather was like a father to him. Illinois Department of Corrections was the space he needed for his maturity. Mr. Watkins stated he graduated from high school at 15 years old and started college the same year. He explained that he did not know what his purpose was, but he had passion for learning, and he was still immature. Mr. Watkins explained the work his mother did with other children at Child Protective Services showed her compassion, selflessness, and passion. He stated others were inspired by the work that he has done. He stated the first ten years they did not have a lot of programs that were available to people with life sentences, therefore someone older than him encouraged him to get his own education. He stated he would buy books from commissary and the first book he bought was a Bible. He studied civil and criminal law, and he could not believe that he would be able to make an impact, graduate from two colleges and receive a master's degree. Mr. Watkins explained how he has spent over 10,000 days in Illinois Department of Corrections, and he does not believe it was a waste. He stated his family suffered not only from the loss of his stepfather but the loss of him as well. He stated he is blessed to be able to counsel others and he been an instructor for IDOC for a couple of years. He wants people to understand how much they counsel their family members, encourage them, and are there for their family.

Mr. Tremayne Simpson, Mr. Watkins' brother, thanked everyone for being there and all the family who is here in person to help. He stated he believes his brother is innocent and he will always support him. He stated he was only 12 years old when he lost his father and brother at the same time. He shared a couple stories about his childhood with the Board. He stated he stayed the night with his grandma the night before and when they arrived at the house, police cars were outside, and they were told to go inside their shared bedroom. He stated his mother began to cry and that was when he found out his father had died. He has held onto his fondest memories with him. Despite his father not being Eric's biological father, he still loved him. He stated his brother encouraged him to be the leader of the family and be strong for his mother and sister. Despite being incarcerated, he has spent the last 27 years bettering himself, through spiritual counseling and support. His mother has breast cancer, has had a stroke, brain bleed, pneumonia and blood clots in her lungs which caused her to have a feeding tube, through all of that, she supports his innocence. He stated she would be here today if she could be, and he will continue to make a meaningful impact with his family and community.

Mr. Bohland stated Mr. Watkins has done an excellent job with pursuing education but questioned what he has pursued for actual innocence.

Mr. Watkins stated he has reached out to several law firms and the issue is there is no newly discovered evidence. He explained how the person who represented him on the appeal has passed away and it has been difficult for him. He stated Ms. Mbekeani would like to introduce him to an attorney.



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Mr. Bohland stated he wanted to verify Mr. Watkins has not done anything to pursue it. Mr. Watkins stated he is worried about his mother's health, and he does not want to put her through any more than she already has been.

Ms. Courtney Quam, Cook County Assistant State's Attorney stated they oppose parole in this case. She stated the Prisoner Review Board has 15 factors under the new law, not one factor is the likelihood of his innocence. She stated granting parole based off innocence is not what parole is for. She stated he has refused to take responsibility, and parole should not be used in that way.

Ms. Mbekeani stated factor 13 in the statute is about remorse and accountability. She explained how the State argued he cannot be rehabilitated because he states he is innocent. She stated that insisting a man take responsibility for something that he has denied for 30 years is injustice. She then discussed the difficulty of proving innocence.

Ms. Globokar questioned whether there were allegations of physical abuse.

Ms. Mbekeani stated not that she is aware of. She explained how the individuals who testified he committed the crime, got the minimal sentencing and it was by agreement of the State, they will get less time with testimony. She stated for Mr. Watkins to be able to come in front of a judge, he would need to be able to prove there is new evidence.

Ms. Globokar questioned whether there has been any contact with codefendants.

Ms. Mbekeani stated not on her part, but that is something he can pursue with a post-conviction attorney.

Mr. Watkins stated the attorney's name was Mr. Edwin but he could not remember his last name. Mr. Watkins' further explained that the evidence at trial did not match with what the State's Attorney said and that there was no examination of the documents because it was tendered by the attorney.

Ms. Globokar questioned how long the jury trial lasted. Ms. Quam stated she does not know.

End of Discussion.



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DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to grant parole (CTERRONES-MCOATES). Motion prevailed with a 7-2 vote. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Coates, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Shoffner, Ms. Terrones, Ms. Tison and Mr. Tupy. Mr. Bohland and Ms. Globokar dissented.

After a complete review of Mr. Eric Watkins' case, and after giving thoughtful discussion and consideration to all factors, the Board decided and voted to grant parole to Mr. Watkins, subject to conditions of parole release as set by the Board and by law. The Board hereby finds that Mr. Eric Watkins 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."



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EN BANC MINUTE SHEET
OPEN SESSION- August 21, 2025

Individual in Custody's Name: Jonathan Coleman IDOC Number: R41176

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 1001 N. Walnut Street, Springfield, Illinois, on August 21, 2025, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Jonathan Coleman R41176.

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

Recording Secretary: Ellen Wayne

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

On May 6th, 2025, Board Member Mr. Kenneth Tupy conducted a youthful parole release hearing with Mr. Jonathan Coleman via Webex at Lawrence Correctional Center. Mr. Coleman was present with his attorney Ms. Maggie Heims of the Cook County Public Defender's Office. Ms. Vanessa Coleman, the petitioner's wife, his mother Ms. Yvone Coleman, his sister Ms. Eva Coleman and his friend Mr. Ryan Valladares were also present. Mr. Valladares owns a towing company called Jimmy's Tow service.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On the day of the shooting on December 20, 2001, the victim, Ricardo Cabrales ("Latin Dragon") had been working on his car in front of his house before walking to a nearby garage. At the garage, he was given a bottle of radiator fluid, and he headed back to his home through an alley. While walking down the alley, he was approached from behind by a maroon-colored car. Witnesses heard several gunshots and heard Cabrales scream. One witness described seeing the maroon car drive away from the scene of the shooting with the barrel of a gun sticking out the backseat window. Three witnesses saw the Petitioner and his brother driving a vehicle matching that description. One witness testified that he saw the Petitioner sitting in the backseat of the car as it sped away from the scene of the shooting with the Petitioner's brother at the wheel. Each of these witnesses identified the Petitioner in a lineup. Ricardo Cabrales died of multiple gunshot wounds.

Mr. Coleman went through jury trial and was sentenced to 65 aggregate years for murder with a 25-year enhancement for the gun on January 25, 2005. Pursuant to Alabama and Buffer, he was resentenced on October 2, 2023, to 35 years with a projected-out date of December 14, 2036. He has been in custody 23 years. His brother Joshua Coleman was sentenced to 26 years for driving the car. His re-sentence is being appealed (Appellate Court No. 1-23-1821).



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CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Coleman's criminal history was discussed in Closed Session due to him being a juvenile at the time of the offense.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Coleman currently has an A Grade and no escape risk. He is currently assigned to Inside Grounds since January 1, 2025. He is hospice trained and currently attending GED 1 classes. He is on the waitlist for Inside/Outside Dads, Aim Higher, Thinking for a Change, and Anger Management. He has worked as a porter, dietary aide, and in property and clothing.

Mr. Coleman has had several tickets during his incarceration. Starting with Lawrence Correctional Center, Mr. Coleman received tickets ranging from Drugs/Drug Paraphernalia- Intoxicants, Dangerous Disturbance to which pepper balls were released, Contraband and Misuse/Damage to Property, and Sexual Misconduct, where he grabbed his wife's breast during a visit.

While at Stateville Correctional Center, he received tickets for Smoking, Damage to Property and Contraband- Unlawful Use of Property, Dangerous Disturbance/Insolence/Disobeying a Direct Order and another ticket of Insolence and Disobeying a Direct Order.

While at Menard Correctional Center, he received several tickets which include two Assaults to another Inmate/Dangerous Disturbance, Gang/Unauthorized Organizational Activity, Violation of Rules, Gang related ticket, and Frivolous Lawsuit.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. Coleman married Vanessa Coleman when he was in prison. Ms. Coleman testified at the re-sentencing that he has changed. One of his former teachers Mr. Walter Taylor also testified in the re-sentencing that Mr. Coleman walked the teacher to the bus as protection when he was in school. He also had testimony from the Pastor at Holy Angels church. The victim was in another gang and moved into the neighborhood with his family. The Latin Kings wanted him to move out and told Mr. Coleman to get the "Carabelas" to leave the neighborhood. There were a number of altercations including some shootings between Mr. Coleman and the victim. His sister Eva testified that the victim chased her home in his car on the day of the offense and Mr. Coleman believed that the victim was telling him that he was going after his family.

Mr. Coleman testified he has been in the Latin Kings from the time he was 13 until 2012, when he retired from the Latin Kings. He said he had a rough early life, and he went to Sullivan House which was an alternative high school because he was expelled from the public high school for fighting. He spent the first ten years of his custody in Illinois Department of Corrections in the gang and his dad died in 2012 and then his mother said she needed him. This is when he retired from the Latin Kings and there was no punishment given to Mr. Coleman for retiring from the gang. IDOC Supplemental Program Report still lists him as an active Latin King, but Mr. Coleman says that unless he officially leaves the Latin



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Kings, he would still be considered an active member. The re-sentencing Judge stated Mr. Coleman had left the gang and was remorseful over the murder.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Coleman's wife works at pharmaceutical transport company called American Carrier and is willing to let him come live with her. She lives in Blue Island, Illinois. Mr. Vallandares owns a tow truck company and stated he would be willing to give him a job. Mr. Coleman's wife stated her uncle Mr. Thomas Ross, is a member of Alliance of Local Service Organization which can provide additional assistance and support services. He additionally has a large network of family and friends who will support him. Mr. Roderiquez would also give him a job at his barbershop.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

Cook County Assistant State's Attorney submitted a letter and appeared in person to protest the release of Mr. Coleman.

ENBANC HISTORY

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

Closed Executive Session: KTUPY-JGRUBBS

Open Executive Session: RSHOFFNER-JGRUBBS

DISCUSSION

Ms. Maggie Heim, Mr. Jonathan Coleman's attorney, stated this is his only shot at parole, he has been showing that he wants to be a better person, even before the Miller case was decided. She stated he was already changing his behavior to be the person his family needs him to be, and he has spent 23 years growing up in prison. She explained that he has had a lot of time to think about what he has done and how it has affected his family along with the victim's family. He has remained in contact with friends and family. She asked everyone in person to stand who is at the hearing to support him. She showed the Board he had 27 friends, family, nieces, nephews and cousins; she stated 20 people could not make it. She explained how he has three different people who are willing to open their homes for him. She stated during his resentencing, his wife moved from Indiana to Illinois. She stated she lives 20 minutes away from to his family. She stated he stays in regular contact with friends and family. She explained how people come to him for advice due to his calming influence. She explained how his sentence was lowered from 65 to 35 years. She stated after his resentencing; he tried to be involved in more programming.

Mr. Coleman thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. He stated he was a young adolescent, was influenced by the streets but he is no longer looking for approval from peers. He explained how he has learned a lot over the years of his incarceration and the biggest lesson he has learned is to value life. He admits he was selfish and hopeless in the beginning of his incarceration, but he is not the 16-year-old



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kid who took the life of someone anymore. He understands how precious life is now and he takes fully responsibility for his actions. He stated it took a lot of work to be the person that he is today, and he was manipulated by older gang members. He stated he had to fight to become someone new and he left the gang life in 2012 which was not an easy task. He stated Latin Kings do not just usually walk away but he knew it was time for him to change so he took the opportunity and so many doors opened up for him. He stated he was able to go to school and get married to his best friend. He explained how one of the programs he completed was victim impact, he learned how that affected not only himself but the family and community. He stated if he could go back and do things differently he would. He stated he is not asking for a free pass but for a chance to prove all the work he has done. He wants to live in peace and wants to help others not make the same choices he made. He stated the more you go through life, the heavier the burden is. He stated he has been married now for 7 years to his best friend, and they have been focusing on his reentry plan. He stated he has programming and counseling entities willing to help him on the outside. He hopes during this process they can see how much he has grown since he was 16 years old. He explained at the beginning of his incarceration, he was not able to apologize and now he can, at almost 40 years old.

Ms. Jessica Carrier, mitigation specialist, stated this is her first time being in front of a parole board and the vast majority of people outgrow misconduct. She stated from 1999-2008, an average person had 22 misconduct tickets. She explained how he is well below the average person and only three of the tickets were gang related. She explained how brain science shows most people make bigger mistakes before the age of 26 and she refers to the chart that was passed to the Board. She stated between the ages of 26-35 years old, he turned a corner and there were no more gang related or assault tickets. She stated house rules behavior improved and the tickets show that he is turning the way that he addresses conflict. She stated from the ages of 36-40, he has no assaults and house rules have gone way down, therefore he has learned to avoid physical altercations. She stated he has no serious infractions for the last five years. She explained how it was challenging during Covid, and he maintained the skills he developed. She stated the gang activity was from the ages of 23-26 years old and that was due to his brain not being fully developed. She stated several roots of rehabilitation started early and he has taken eight courses over the last five years for individual counseling. She stated he has worked from 2002 to current and he has a good foundation to make good choices and decisions. She explained how his parents struggled with generational abuse.

Ms. Terrones asked Ms. Carrier to verify that he has been taking programing for counseling and mental health.

Mr. Coleman stated he has taken mental health in Stateville Correctional Center and that was when he started learning different tools he could use. Mr. Tupy stated that was over ten years ago.

Ms. Courtney Quam, Cook County Assistant State's Attorney, objects in person to parole, stated her objection was submitted in June around the same time the law changed but is still applicable. She stated they are concerned about his disciplinary report, and they do not believe the apology to be genuine. She stated it was a premeditated, revenge murder and until prompted, he did not apologize or take any responsibility.

Mr. Tupy questioned the appeal that is still pending from 2023.



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Ms. Heim stated the response was received yesterday and only states it was received so far. She stated it could be in the next month. She explained when they made the choice to lower the sentence, they were aware that the Board could grant parole. She stated this is the only time they can consider parole for him. In the resentencing from 2023, there was a discussion of the remorse and even at the institutional hearing.

Mr. Heaton questioned what argument was in the appeal. Ms. Heim stated the misunderstanding of underlying facts.

Mr. Heaton stated if the appeal is successful, the sentence could be lowered.

Ms. Heim stated if the appeal was successful, in a year or so he could have another resentencing, but it could be a three-to-four-year delay.

Ms. Quam stated the letter of objection was submitted to his counsel, prior to his original En Banc hearing. Ms. Heim agreed.

Ms. Globokar stated she would like Mr. Coleman to talk about the intoxicant ticket.

Mr. Coleman stated he was in Pontiac Correctional Center at the time, and someone he considered a friend, had a birthday, so they put together alcohol to celebrate. He stated he took responsibility and plead guilty to the ticket to which he was given segregation time.

End of Discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (KTUPY-JGRUBBS). Motion prevailed by a unanimous vote.

After reviewing the 15 Statutory Factors and applying them to the evidence in this case, the Board decided that Mr. Coleman 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- July 31, 2025

Individual in Custody's Name: Carl Furrell IDOC Number: S03263

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 1001 N. Walnut Street, Springfield, Illinois, on August 21, 2025, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Carl Furrell S03263.

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

Recording Secretary: Ellen Wayne

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Carl Allen Furrell Jr. #S03263 was interviewed by Board Member, Mr. Jared Bohland live via Webex virtual platform from Pontiac Correctional Center on May 20th, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. The petitioner identifies as female and prefers to be recognized as Carla Allicen Furrell while also preferring to use she/her pronouns. Ms. Furrell was represented by Attorney Ms. Joslyn Sandifer and also present for the hearing on behalf was Ms. Furrell's mother, Ms. Melba Crabtree. Ms. Furrell appeared in blue uniform, well prepared, and communicated well with respect throughout the interview.

Ms. Furrell's holding offense is a 2002 Murder/Intent to Kill conviction out of Perry County resulting from a negotiated open plea that ended in an original sentence of 50 years. That sentence was altered in 2023 when she accepted a negotiated plea deal of 40 years prior to her youthful offender resentencing hearing that was granted. Ms. Furrell was 16 years old at the time of the offense. She is now 39 years old having spent 22 years in custody. Her Mandatory Supervised Release date is September 28th, 2042, with her maximum discharge date being September 28th, 2045.

In an opening statement, Ms. Furrell argued that it has been 23 years since the offense. She is sorry for her past and takes ownership of the crime, stating she was wrong and cannot change it. She states she was not thinking at that young age, and that she has portrayed herself how she needed to over the years in order to survive prison. Ms. Sandifer argued in opening that it was gang culture that led to the crime, and that changes while incarcerated are evident. Ms. Crabtree testified her love for her child and that she missed her. She wants to offer support and believes she can help with employment as well as a new start.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Records reflect on September 26th, 2002, Carl Furrell entered into the dwelling place of Roy Thompson in DuQuoin with the intent to commit a theft.



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On September 27th, 2002, Carl Furrell stabbed the victim, James Adcock, to death in the neck and chest during the course of a planned armed robbery of a taxi driver.

Carl Furrell was arrested on September 28th, 2002, and charged with four counts of murder and one count of armed robbery. Furrell was initially housed in the St. Clair County Detention Center and then transferred to Perry County Jail. Bond was revoked on October 21st, 2003. That same day the petitioner entered into a negotiated plea of guilty to one count of 1st degree Murder and one count of Residential Burglary, committed when the petitioner was sixteen years old, in exchange for dismissal of other charges as well as the State's agreement to cap its sentencing recommendation at 60 years total and to have the sentence for the Residential Burglary to run concurrent to the Murder.

Records also reflect while awaiting sentencing, on November 5th, 2003, Furrell was involved in a battery incident of another individual in custody. On that date, Furrell and another individual in custody were playing cards when Furrell asked for a sexual favor. An argument ensued and Furrell attempted to stab the victim with a pencil. The victim knocked the pencil away and restrained Furrell until jail officers arrived to assist.

On December 8th, 2003, at the sentencing hearing, the State argued in aggravation that based on four stab wounds that the intent was to kill the victim, that the crime was premeditated, and that it was cold-blooded in nature. The court took into consideration numerous factors including Furrell's age. The court expressed appreciation for the confession but also was troubled by the facts that the petitioner had continued to stab the victim in the chest multiple times after fatally wounding him in the neck, and because the petitioner admitted plans to commit further crimes. The trial court noted surprise at the State's offer in negotiation given that they could have pursued a life sentence and thereafter sentenced the petitioner to 50 years in prison for the Murder, and six months and 17 days for the Residential Burglary.

Ms. Furrell filed numerous post-conviction petitions that remained unsuccessful until resentencing under youthful offender arguments was granted in 2022. Ms. Furrell accepted another negotiated plea deal to 40 years rather than following through with the resentencing hearing. On June 23rd, 2023, Furrell stated that she took the negotiated plea deal knowing that the resentence would qualify her for parole consideration under the Youth Parole Act.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Ms. Furrell's entire criminal history involves juvenile records, and these were discussed in closed session.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

As for social history and support, Ms. Furrell has had no in person visits since 2006 despite emergency contacts including her mother, stepfather, godmother, three sister in-laws, and a brother in-law. She receives financial support from family and friends with a sister in-law providing the most support. She stated that her mom stopped communicating with her in 2007 and has only recently began communicating again.



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Ms. Furrell's mental and physical health was discussed in closed session.

Ms. Furrell has completed programming for Aim Higher, Inside out Dads, and most recently completed Money Smart in 2025. She has completed Set Free Bible studies. She dropped out of the Making Time Count program in the past for lack of participation.

Ms. Furrell shared that she believes in the Christian faith and tries to practice the moral system of that faith.

Ms. Furrell completed her GED in 2012, as well as a bloodborne pathogens and standard precautions course. She argued that there is no college offered at Pontiac Correctional Center at the moment.

Ms. Furrell has held institutional jobs as East House help, South House floor maintenance, in the kitchen, and as a gallery worker. She currently has a job in the kitchen.

Ms. Furrell has three pages of tickets from 2006 to present. There are a total of five major gang tickets totaling 3.5 years of segregation, a disciplinary transfer, and 7.5 years of administrative detention/protective custody. There are five tickets for fighting or dangerous disturbance totaling 15 months of segregation. There are six tickets pertaining to trafficking, contraband, or drugs totaling 14 months and seven days of segregation. There is one major for sexual misconduct with 28 days segregation. Four minor and 11 major tickets resulting in seven months of segregation were accrued while Ms. Furrell was already in administrative detention and protective custody from January 30th, 2017, through August 22nd, 2024. It should also be noted that a Security Summary for Escorts report from January 31st of 2025 lists Ms. Furrell as still having active Maniac Latin Disciple membership. In 2025, Ms. Furrell accrued a minor ticket for failure to report for work on June 4th and has since accrued another four pending tickets for refusal or failure to show for work assignments from July 4th to July 19th.

Ms. Furrell had responses to many of the tickets on the record, and many of these responses were shared with the Board along with the facts discovered on those tickets from review of the master file record at Pontiac Correctional Center. In particular, the record among the varying tickets reflect a continued involvement in gang activity and concerns with a gang leadership position that led to the seven and half year administrative detention period, as well as her conduct while in administrative detention.

Ms. Furrell shared that she feels she had to portray herself as a leader in the gangs in order to survive. She admits she held status with the Latin Folk gang in prison. She states she learned that segregation was safer than general population and therefore found ways to be segregated. She describes her behavior as "weaseling her way into BS gang tickets and then pleading guilty in order to be placed in segregation and avoid even worse gang orders."

Ms. Furrell was originally received at IYC Harrisburg on December 9th, 2003. She was transferred to Graham Correctional Center and then Menard Correctional Center in 2005. She remained there until Pontiac Correctional Center in 2014, Stateville Correctional Center in 2015, and back to Pontiac Correctional Center in 2016. As mentioned, she was placed in administrative detention on January 30th, 2017, due to Security Threat Group Affiliation with a leadership role as well as consistent gang tickets.



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She remained in maximum security protective custody until August 22nd, 2024. Toward the end of this period, she was graded medium security but remained under maximum security protocols due to location. She signed out of protective custody on August 22nd, 2024, and entered general population. She is currently medium security with no escape risk.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Ms. Furrell submitted a written affidavit in April of 2024 outlining her version of events. In it she wrote that on September 26th, 2002, she and Billy Irvin decided to try and find some money so they could get high and drunk. They were talking and decided to rob a taxicab driver. On the night of the 27th, they called a taxi from a woman's apartment by the cemetery. She stated that she had left, changing her mind, and began to walk across a field. She was almost out of view when the taxi showed up and Billy called out to her. She claimed that she told Billy she was good, but Billy yelled back calling her a chicken. Ms. Furrell states she let her foolish pride cost her, her own life along with so many others. She did get in the car and rode to her house in St. John's. She went into her house and tried to find money to pay the driver but could not. She then ran across the street to a BINGO game where her mom was and asked her for money, but she did not have any. When she came back, Billy kept stating, "let's beat him up, take his money and run." She gave in and they had the taxi driver take them to a corn field out of town where they used to have parties.

Once there, she told the taxi driver to give her his money. She states she had a gun pointed at him that she had gotten from Ashley Fitzgerald's home. The taxi driver would not give them any money, and he stepped on the gas while in reverse. They hit a bump or ditch, which flung Ms. Furrell backwards. The gun she was holding fell into the front seat at which point she states she began to fear for her life. She stated she took a pocketknife that she had also gotten from Ashley Fitzgerald the night before and used it to stab the taxi driver without thinking about what she was doing. She stated she did it out of fear for her life. She immediately freaked out and got into the front seat with Billy in the back, leaving the victim at the scene. She stated she never wanted to kill the man, only to rob him. She argues they did not leave the victim because they were cold blooded killers, but rather because they were scared. They drove and ditched everything they thought could lead police to them.

The statement also admits that much of what the State claims is true, but denies the murder being planned or pre-meditated. Her position at the time was that she did not deny needing to be locked up, but that she no longer believes she should be locked up for 40 years.

Given this pre-written affidavit, Ms. Furrell clarified some points during our interview. She stated that the residential burglary incident on September 26th was for stealing two guns and a knife that she had taken from Ashley Fitzgerald's family. Ashley was a friend and girlfriend at the time. Ms. Furrell also admitted that these were the same weapons used the next day against the cab driver. She reiterated that the plan was not to kill the victim. She admitted that the co-offender Billy Irvin was younger than her at the time, being only fourteen years old. She confirmed that she had a gun and a knife while Billy had the second gun. She described the incident as a pre-meditated robbery that went sideways.

Ms. Furrell admits that she stabbed the victim in the neck at first and then three more times in the chest. She states that she believed at the time that the victim was going to grab the gun she dropped, and



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that he would hurt her. She admits to pushing him out of the vehicle from within the car, climbing to the front, and then driving off in his vehicle. She states she then went to her mother's house, took a shower, burned her clothes, hid the gun, and went to sleep. She then returned to Ashley's apartment where she had stolen the weapons the night prior and stayed the night there. On the 29th, she returned to her mom's house, hung out with friends, went with her mom to the Pub Club, went to Walmart, and then returned to the Pub Club where she was found by the police.

She does show remorse, and she extends her apologies to the family of the victim. She also confirmed for me that she took another negotiated plea deal to a 40 year resentencing rather than proceeding with the resentencing hearing she was granted. She stated she knew it would give her access to parole eligibility through youthful parole.

PAROLE PLANS

Ms. Furrell's current parole plan is to live with her mother in Murphysboro, Illinois. Shortly after release, she would like to move into her own place. She plans to provide for her basic needs by calling unemployment for assistance with clothes, a license, and seeking a job. She plans to sign up for an ex-felon benefit program as well as sign up for social security disability income based on emotional stress from incarceration. She is willing to apply anywhere for a job and would like to work in a tattoo shop and sell art. She does not have any specific jobs lined up at this time. She also plans to be a speaker for the transgender community in order to educate others. She has support from her mom, sister in-law, and an aunt figure. She mentioned having support from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) as well as a senator.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

No public opposition to this petition at this time.

ENBANC HISTORY

This is Ms. Furrell's first time in front of the Board for parole consideration.

Closed Executive Session: JBOHLAND-KTISON

Open Executive Session: RSHOFFNER-MCOATES

DISCUSSION

Ms. Josilyn Sandifer, Ms. Carla Furrell's attorney, stated she wants the Board to see all of the good Carla has done. Over the last 23 years, Carla has not just been getting in fights but has been making efforts to move forward. She explained how she has been in several facilities that do not offer proper programming. She stated in 2023, she received a bloodborne pathogens certificate and Salvation Army certificate; in 2019, she won a soccer tournament with first place and received a domestic violence awareness certificate; in 2022, she received a domestic violence awareness certificate and gave a



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donation; in 2024, she took an ongoing mental health awareness course and a studies program she applied for but was unable to complete due to financial cost. She stated mental health circumstances were never taken into full consideration and had she been diagnosed properly at the age of 16 years old, it would show where her mental capacity is. She stated Carla was on LSD at the time of the incident occurred.

Ms. Shoffner stated that is speculative unless there is proof.

Ms. Sandifer stated she wanted to discuss the extensive ticket background. She explained how Ms. Furrell identifies as a woman, and most tickets are related to her trying to find her identity. She stated when you are in the prison system, you cannot just say you want to be segregated, therefore, she did the tickets for a greater cause. She stated she felt the best place for herself was to remain in segregation and she got her peace in segregation.

Ms. Furrell stated when first coming to Menard Correctional Center, she was only 18 years old, scared and it was being run by violence and gangs. She stated the environment she was put into, she had to survive, and she would rather be in segregation than the worst-case scenario. She stated she could not bare waking up in general population and being stabbed because she was surrounded by serial killers and the worst of the worst. She explained if she did not go into segregation, she would have either caught a new case or lost her life. She explained how most tickets were not violent except for the assault in 2014 and stated she had to participate. She stated every ticket was to avoid a bigger one and she believes she made some good and bad decisions. She stated the Board might see it as bad, but she sees it as good because she is alive.

Ms. Shoffner stated she would like for her to explain how she has changed her life.

Ms. Furrell stated in 2015, someone who rode the bus with her back to Pontiac attacked her and she had to defend herself. She stated she has not had any physical altercation until 2024 due to her being assaulted in the kitchen, but she did not hit back this time.

Ms. Sandifer stated she started the process of recanting out of the gang but was denied. Ms. Shoffner asked Ms. Furrell to explain.

Ms. Furrell stated she put into renounce, went through the whole process but it was denied. She stated she was told it was rarely accepted, and she will always be acknowledged as gang member unless she goes to Logan Correctional Center. She then stated she was told it would be pointless to do so, and she will always be viewed that way. She stated she is transgender and would be killed immediately. She explains how she is in medium security right now and if she were to go to Menard Correctional Center to gang bang, she would be killed for attempting that. She explained how she would never put herself in that type of situation. She stated during the last two months of continuance, she has been using Edovo, which is a new tablet program to get certificates. She stated she has 47 certificates and that should show she is striving and ready to go home.

Ms. Sandifer stated she encourages the Board to consider the complexity of where Carla has found herself throughout her time. She stated the tickets have been magnified and the things she has done to change has been minimized. She stated there is no way she could expressly come out and be who she is



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and stay alive. She stated she has almost a decade without any violent behavior which is an indication of growth.

End of Discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (JBOHLAND-RHEATON). Motion prevailed by a unanimous vote.

After reviewing the 15 Statutory Factors and applying them to the evidence in this case, the Board decided that Ms. Furrell 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- August 21, 2025

Individual in Custody's Name: Lawrence Wideman IDOC Number: R40850

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 1001 N. Walnut Street, Springfield, Illinois, on August 21, 2025, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Lawrence Wideman R40850.

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

Recording Secretary: Ellen Wayne

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

On June 12, 2025, Mr. Wideman was interviewed from Hill Correctional Center via WebEx by Board Member Robin Shoffner. Nancy Vincent, Mr. Wideman's attorney, was also present. He stated that he was nervous but grateful to have this opportunity. He communicated in a very polite, sincere and articulate manner. He stated that during his years of incarceration he has been putting forth every effort to show that he is a good person. After 25 years in prison, he states that he has spent most of his life behind bars and wants to establish a life for himself.

Mr. Lawrence Wideman is currently 42 years old and resides at Hill Correctional Center. He is serving a sentence of 30 years imprisonment for the convictions of First-Degree Murder and Armed Robbery following the beating death of Howard Thomas on August 6, 1999. At the time of his crime, he was 17 years old.

Initially, Mr. Wideman was sentenced to a term of 43 years in Illinois Department of Corrections, however, he filed a post-conviction petition challenging the sentence. On July 20, 2023, the trial judge reduced his sentence to 35 years. He also filed a post-conviction petition claiming actual innocence, however, that petition was dismissed. Mr. Wideman filed a motion to reconsider his new sentence. On October 19, 2023, his sentence was reduced to 30 years. He has a pending appeal challenging the 30-year sentence, and requesting release as time considered served.

Mr. Wideman has served 25 years in custody and his Mandatory Supervised Release date is October 14, 2029, which is approximately four years and one month from today.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

In the late-night hours of August 6, 1999, a group of four to five young men, including then 17-year-old Lawrence Wideman attacked 51-year-old Howard Treadwell as he was walking toward his home. He died of blunt force trauma after being beaten by the group. His injuries included multiple broken



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bones, cerebral hemorrhages, and a torn kidney, among other injuries. The apparent motive for the attack was to rob someone of money so they could go to the liquor store.

The other defendants received lengthy sentences for this crime. Mr. Frad Muhammad, 19 years old, was identified as hitting Mr. Howard with a baseball bat several times and was sentenced to 55 years. Mr. Marvin Treadwell, 18 years old, identified as the initial aggressor, was sentenced to 32 years. Mr. Gregory Reed, 19 years old, was sentenced to 25 years, and he is now on parole. Mr. Jovan Mosely, 19 years old, was not identified by witnesses therefore he was not charged.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

This was discussed in closed session.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Wideman's institutional adjustment has been remarkable. He has a total of 11 tickets in the last 25 years all of which were not violent. Mr. Wideman's major infractions were in 2005 such as Gang Activity. He states that he disavowed any gang association and has never been in a gang. In 2007, 2010, 2016, he had tickets for Disobey Orders. In 2014, he had a ticket for Theft, which was for three bars of soap and trash bags. In 2023, he received a ticket for having a razor to which he states he was on writ going to court re-sentencing and wanted to shave before he left.

Mr. Wideman is most proud of his work history, having worked 22 out of the 25 years he has been incarcerated. He has worked in the warehouse, in the laundry, in the kitchen as a cook, and in the law library. He states that even during lockdown and COVID 19, he worked washing and pressing officers' clothes.

He earned his General Education Development (GED) along with numerous educational certificates.

STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. Wideman admits that he punched, kicked and grabbed the victim. He states that he never had possession of the bat and that he never hit Mr. Thomas after he had been struck with the bat. He states that witnesses called the cops, and that Mr. Thomas was still moving when they left. He states that he went to his father's home and was told by his father that he had to turn himself into the cops. He stated that he did not turn himself in but was arrested six months later. He stated he knew the longer he waited, the worse it would get.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Wideman has been accepted at St. Leonard's Ministries and Pathway Ministries upon his release. His sister Krese lives in Calumet City and has been a constant support for him throughout his incarceration. She will be nearby for help, support, guidance, and assistance as he may reenter society.



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He has expressed a desire to return to Chicago to be near his sister and family. He stated he would like to get a job doing construction.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

Cook County's Assistant State's Attorney wrote a nine-page letter and appeared in person to oppose the granting of parole to Mr. Wideman.

ENBANC HISTORY

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

DISCUSSION

Ms. Nancy Vincent, Mr. Wideman's attorney, started off with thanking the Board for this opportunity. She stated she wants to let his disciplinary record speak for itself; he only has 11 tickets. She explains to the Board about his remarkable disciplinary report and stated it shows what he is capable of on the inside and the outside. She stated it is hard to maintain that type of discipline in a maximum facility. She stated he does not want people to feel sorry for him or excuse what he has done. She stated he was abandoned as a teenager by everyone who was supposed to take care of him and if he could turn back the clock and make everything different, he would. She stated the only thing he could do is make himself a better person. She stated he got his high school equivalency in Cook County Jail. She stated he has taken numerous college credits, and he has taken his first course at Lake Land College and he will continue to do that in and out of prison. She stated what happened was senseless and horrible and he will never forget that and neither will his family. She stated he was a child at the time and now has become a man. She explained how he had his 18th birthday in Cook County Jail, and he has been incarcerated since he was 17 years old. She stated he has never joined a gang and does not have any tattoos.

Mr. Wideman stated he appreciates the opportunity today and he discussed his rehabilitation progress. He stated there was never a logical excuse for what happened, but he has accepted full responsibility in taking Mr. Thomas' life. He stated he has remorse every time he thinks about it and hopes to be forgiven.

Ms. Lakreathcia Wideman, Mr. Wideman's sister, stated all of his nieces and nephews are present support even though he has been incarcerated since before they were all born. She explained how they have grown up during his incarceration and he helped guide the children through the phone. She stated he was able to help change the kids' decisions for the better. She stated they have several college graduates, and one is a nursing student. She stated he used himself as an example of what not to be. She explained how she works a lot in the church and community so she is around the younger youth, Mr. Wideman talks to them, lets them know when they are doing good and that there is no reward for doing what you should not be doing. She stated when you make impulsive decisions, you need to take accountability. She stated he is stern because he understands. She stated he has given guidance to not only his nieces and nephews, but the youth as well with friends and family.



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Ms. Courtney Quam, Cook County Assistant State's Attorney, opposes the granting of parole in this case. She stated the main reason is related to genuine accountability. She stated he does not take fully responsibility for Mr. Thomas' death, and she explained how he has given several different statements from the police, court and resentencing. She stated accountability and remorse are not a check box.

Ms. Ivori Johnson, the youngest sister of the victim, stated he was the oldest of siblings and that their parents passed away when they were young, so he was also a father figure because he was 20 years older. She stated he walked her down the aisle at her wedding and she explains how her daughters loved their uncle. She stated her youngest two are twins and were only three months old when he was murdered. She stated you could always rely on him to come over and visit, invited or not. She stated she remembers her brothers face when she saw him in the hospital. She explains how she will never forgive Mr. Wideman and that his apology means nothing. Until this day, the family still hurts over the loss.

Mr. Bernard Thomas, the son of victim, read a letter from his youngest niece. She does not believe he should be released for killing an innocent man. She asked him, how you can ignore a man who was begging for his life? She explained he had to be identified by the ring on his finger because he was beaten so badly. She does not know who he was, but she can talk about the impact it has brought onto the family. She stated her mother hid the constant crying when talking about him and she will never know how great of a man he was. She stated anyone who can beat a man, hear him begging for his life and make the conscious decision to continue beating him, they have no mercy.

Ms. Sharonda Thomas, the daughter of victim, stated she goes over the day her father was taken from her. She read a letter that she prepared and wrote herself. She stated he was a good man, and she has many fond memories of going to the park and him pushing her on the swings. She talks about how her father use to walk her eight blocks to school, even though she begged to ride the bus. She stated the day before he was killed, she had just come home from San Diego, and she stated the first thing she wanted to do was go see her parents. She stated she has three kids, two girls and one boy, but his sister died from house fire. She stated he was excited to show her the house he had just bought 21 days prior, and she remembers her father holding his granddaughter. She stated the house he bought was located by the elementary school that they walked past every day. She stated he told her she was the only person who has seen the house yet and when she moves back home, they could stay there too. She explains how she was really proud of her father; he had goals, he was a human and was heartbreakingly taken away. She stated less than 24 hours from seeing him, her aunt called her and said she needed to come to the hospital because he was beaten on his way home. She stated she prayed the entire drive. She explained how there was another family in the hospital as well for the same thing and that two people had been beaten the same way. She stated she could not recognize his face, but she could recognize his hands, the same hands the pushed her in the swing as a child. She stated one month later, three people were charged. She asked the Board not to give him clemency. She stated they had no remorse for her family, so she does not have any for them. She explained how he is still able to receive visits, but she cannot. She stated she is stuck living with his actions. She stated everything he has missed since he was killed.

Mr. Grubbs discusses how he conducted the protest hearing. He stated there is only three here today, but there were 23 others at the protest hearing. He stated they are a wonderful family. He stated he promised to be their voice, but they chose to use their own voices today.



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Ms. Shoffner questioned Mr. Wideman if he had anything to say about those testimonies.

Mr. Wideman stated he has accepted responsibility and stated he only grabbed him. He stated he has tried to get that statement tossed and he hopes to be forgiven.

Ms. Globokar thanked the victim's family for what they shared and how they honor him. She thanked Ms. Vincent for providing the resentencing transcripts. She then questioned Mr. Wideman if he comprehended the severity of this.

Mr. Wideman stated when he found out Mr. Thomas had died, he was devastated. He stated he was not worried about getting arrested but how sorry he was for what happened. He stated it was a horrible feeling knowing an innocent person died.

Ms. Vincent stated the record speaks for itself and she does not agree with State's Attorney's inconsistent understanding of the laws of accountability. She stated he did everything himself for the petition and he has constantly explained what he has done to cause the death. He accepts responsibility.

Mr. Heaton questioned if he did the resentencing himself to which Ms. Vincent stated no.

Mr. Heaton stated Mr. Wideman's sentence was reduced from 43 years to 35 years and then later to 30 years. He stated now he has an appeal pending seeking to reduce the sentence further. Mr. Heaton questioned what the argument was that they are making to justify a further reduction of his sentence.

Ms. Vincent stated that the sentencing judge had not adequately taken into account his rehabilitation.

Ms. Shoffner stated he argued the court did not properly consider his childhood drama and his parents' divorce.

End of discussion.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (RSHOFFNER-JGRUBBS). Motion prevailed with a 8-1 vote. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Coates, Mr. Grubbs, Mr. Heaton, Ms. Shoffner, Ms. Terrones, Ms. Tison and Mr. Tupy. Ms. Globokar dissented.

After reviewing the 15 Statutory Factors and applying them to the evidence in this case, the Board decided that Mr. Wideman 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."