



STATE OF ILLINOIS
 JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR
PRISONER REVIEW BOARD
 Craig Findley, Chairman

EN BANC MINUTE SHEET
OPEN SESSION—April 29, 2021

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following individuals in custody:

C10475	RAYMOND LARSON	C80688	DUANE FRANKLIN
C02117	OSCAR CURTIS	C81714	RUDY BELL
C72908	RICHARD WEST	C56165	DAVID LOTT
A92942	ANTHONY SEARS	C01434	GEORGE PETER
C61397	GERALD CHATMAN		

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Findley.

Roll call was taken by Recording Secretary Parker Freiburg.

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Mr. Max Cerda	X	
Ms. Edith Crigler	X	
Ms. Lisa Daniels	X	
Mr. Oreal James	X	
Ms. Virginia Martinez	X	
Mr. Jeff Mears	X	
Mrs. Aurthur Mae Perkins	X	
Mr. Joseph Ruggiero	X	
Mrs. Drella Savage	X	
Mr. Donald Shelton	X	
Mrs. Eleanor Kaye Wilson	X	
Chairman Craig Findley	X	

12 Members Present

The Recording Secretary presented the March 25, 2021, Open Session Minutes for approval.

Ms. Martinez proposed several corrections, which were unopposed.

Motion to approve Open Session Minutes from **March 25, 2021**, with the adoption of the corrections identified by Ms. Martinez. (VM—JR). Leave.



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The Board heard and voted upon the cases of Raymond Larson, Oscar Curtis, Richard West, Anthony Sears, Gerald Chatman, Duane Franklin, Rudy Bell, David Lott, and George Peter as detailed in the individual case minutes.

Meeting was adjourned (AP—JR). Leave.



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION—April 29, 2021

Name: **RAYMOND LARSON**

IDOC Number: **C10475**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Raymond Larson C10475.

Members present were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Parker Freiburg.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Raymond Larson C10475 is housed in Pontiac Correctional Center. Mr. Larson was interviewed on March 18th at 9:00 am. Present at interview were Board Member Aurthur Perkins and Mr. Long's attorney, Ms. Mira de Jong. Mr. Larson is 76 years old and has served 51 years of incarceration.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

In 1971, Mr. Larson was incarcerated in the Illinois Department of Corrections for Robbery and three counts of Burglary. On May 12, 1972, Mr. Larson was released from IDOC on a three-day furlough.

On May 14, 1972, at 3:00 a.m., he went to the Elmwood Park Ford Dealership at 1825 N. Harlem in Chicago. Mr. Larson broke a window on the overhead door to gain access to the building. Once inside, Mr. Larson drove a 1972 station wagon through the overhead door and parked it on the dealership's lot. He then re-entered the building, entered a 1971 green Mustang Mach 1, and drove away.

Three days later, on May 17, 1972, in Franklin Park, Mr. Larson entered the home of Mrs. Lownie Suchey at gunpoint. He robbed her and sexually assaulted her by forcing her to perform oral copulation upon him. His fingerprints were found in the apartment. One of the items taken from the victim's house was a rifle.

On May 17, 1972, Francis Casolari Jr., a 16-year-old sophomore at Prosser High School in Chicago, returned home from school and, at around 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon, he rode his bike to a nearby pond in Schiller Woods to go fishing. Mr. Casolari never made it home; his parents reported him missing on May 18, 1972. Police found the body of Mr. Casolari in the Schiller Woods, where his naked body was covered with branches and debris.



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On May 19, 1972, police officers stopped a green Ford Mustang. The green Ford Mustang contained Mr. Larson, his brother Gary Larson, and a 14-year-old girl [Note: during Discussion, this was clarified to be a 16-year-old child]. This girl had been reported missing since 10:00 am on May 18, 1972. The police also recovered a pellet gun and a .22 caliber rifle from the car. The car had been stolen from Elmwood Ford Motors on May 14, 1972, while the .22 caliber rifle was the rifle Mr. Larson had stolen from Mrs. Suchey's apartment. The weapons were tested and determined to be the weapons used to take Mr. Casolari's life.

Mr. Larson confessed to the police and an Assistant State's Attorney that he drove a Mustang to the parking lot south of Irving Park Road in the forest preserve. He was looking for something to shoot when he saw a child, standing in the woods, fishing. Mr. Larson stated he was between forty and fifty feet away from the child when he shot the boy in the stomach. The autopsy revealed Mr. Casolari suffered 23 gunshot wounds to his body. Nearby, a beer can containing Mr. Larson's fingerprints was found.

Mr. Larson was later sentenced to 100–300 years for Murder, with a sentence of 4–12 years for Deviate Sexual Assault to run concurrently with the Murder sentence.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Larson was raised by a father who worked as a "debt-collector" for the Chicago Mafia. Desensitized to greed and violence at a young age, he learned how to hot-wire cars as a pre-teen and was sent to juvenile detention at the age of 13. Mr. Larson later dropped out of high school at the age of 16, growing up with a group of reckless young men who robbed and burglarized to satisfy their own selfish desires.

While incarcerated, Mr. Larson has had an excellent disciplinary history, with zero infractions since 2005. Mr. Larson has also excelled in a number of prestigious jobs, including Clerk to the Catholic Chaplain's Office, Industries aide, and Auto car operator. Mr. Larson has earned his GED, multiple associate's degrees, and a bachelor's degree. Mr. Larson was awarded an Apprentice Barber's License and passed the exam for a Sanitarian License. Mr. Larson is deeply committed to his Buddhist faith, meditation, and nonviolence.

Mr. Larson has been diagnosed with Hepatitis C, Hypertension, and Chronic Kidney Disease. Mr. Larson requires a catheter to urinate, changed by nursing staff on a monthly basis. Mr. Larson also suffers from benign prostatic, hypertrophy, and vasculitis neuropathy.

PAROLE PLANS

Wayside Cross Ministries offers Mr. Larson faith-based transitional housing and recovery programs. He has also been accepted at New Beginnings. He will receive mental health counseling through NAMI Chicago. He has a birth certificate and social security card, and



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intends to apply for SSI and SNAP benefits. He also has a longtime friend, Peggy Stapleton, who will provide emotional and financial support.

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Mr. Ruggiero asked to add information about several acts committed by Mr. Larson before his furlough. Mr. Larson was convicted of breaking into houses and holding the victims at knife point. In one break-in, Mr. Larson hit a child while fleeing. In another incident, Mr. Larson stabbed a woman twice in the shoulder and twice in the chest during a burglary. In another burglary, Mr. Larson pretended to be a police officer, and when the victim answered the door, Mr. Larson forced his way in. In a subsequent burglary, after breaking in, Mr. Larson forced the female victim to play card games with him four hours, before ultimately robbing the victim and leaving in the morning.

Ms. Crigler asked what age Mr. Larson was during the convicted crimes, and Mr. Ruggiero noted that Mr. Larson was 27 years old. Mr. Shelton then asked how old Mr. Larson was during furlough and Attorney de Jong answered that Mr. Larson was 24 at the time.

Attorney de Jong noted that Mr. Larson was young and immature at the time of the offenses, and that he has spent the last 51 years bettering himself through education and religion. Attorney de Jong stated that the murder was not premeditated, in that Mr. Larson was not looking to go out and shoot anyone. Mr. Casolari asked Mr. Larson to turn down his radio, because it was scaring away the fish. Mr. Larson stated he would not. According to Mr. Larson, Mr. Casolari threatened to call the police, and, after an argument ensued, Mr. Larson shot Mr. Casolari. Attorney de Jong also noted that the girl Mr. Larson was found with was 16, not 14, when the police stopped him with his brother. Attorney de Jong stated that Mr. Larson's childhood was steeped in trauma, and that Mr. Larson had an abusive father, who was deeply involved in criminal activity.

Attorney de Jong stated that Mr. Larson has committed himself to Buddhism and has changed his life through it. Mr. Larson focuses on the five precepts of the Buddhist faith, which are to not kill, not steal, not engage in sexual misconduct, not use drugs or alcohol, and not lie. Mr. Larson's parole plan includes attending the Ravenswood Chicago Buddhist Temple and he has had multiple letters of support from two Buddhist nuns. Mr. Larson has secured funding for his parole plan, as well as financial support from friend Peggy Stapleton. Mr. Larson will receive mental illness support along with support groups.

Attorney de Jong stated that Mr. Larson has expressed remorse and grief for the crimes he has committed and understands the life-altering choices he has made. Mr. Larson has earned multiple degrees and has held multiple institutional jobs over the years. Mr. Larson has had an



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excellent infraction record with only a few minor tickets. Mr. Larson will lead a quiet life if he is paroled.

Mr. Ruggiero asked Mr. Larson's attorney about an incident in which Mr. Larson held a woman at gunpoint and sexually assaulted her. Attorney de Jong stated Mr. Larson was not convicted of that. Mr. Ruggiero then asked about another incident in which Mr. Larson sexually assaulted a woman for hours during one of the burglaries. Attorney de Jong stated that Mr. Larson does not dispute that he did commit these crimes.

Ms. Martinez asked if Mr. Larson would be willing to participate in sex offender counseling. Attorney de Jong noted that Mr. Larson is willing to undergo sex offender treatment, and that there are several facilities in the community, if that were to be one of Mr. Larson's parole conditions.

Assistant Attorney General Megan Lintker noted that the state would like to request a 90-day stay for the purposes of having Mr. Larson evaluated for possible designation and civil commitment as a Sexually Violent Person, pursuant to statute.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to grant parole (AP—CF). Motion prevails by a vote of 9–3. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mrs. Perkins, Mrs. Savage, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley. Mr. Mears, Mr. Ruggiero, and Mr. Shelton dissented.

After a complete review of Mr. Larson's case, and after giving thoughtful discussion and consideration to all factors, the Board decided and voted to grant parole to Mr. Larson, subject to conditions of parole release as set by the Board and by law. The Board hereby finds that Mr. Larson is an appropriate candidate for parole release at this time.

“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 29, 2021

Name: **OSCAR CURTIS**

IDOC Number: **C02117**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Oscar Curtis C02117.

Members present were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Parker Freiburg.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Oscar Curtis C02117 was interviewed on March 24, 2021, at Lincoln Correctional Center by Board Member Edith L. Crigler and Attorneys Carolyn Klarquist and Pamela Rubeo. Mr. Curtis is currently incarcerated at Lincoln Correctional Center, a medium security adult male prison. He is 69 years of age. He is assigned to the Dietary Unit and also serves as a Housing Unit Porter. He is divorced, with no children. Mr. Curtis was sentenced to 75–90 years for the Murder of Vivian Shepherd and 15–Life for the Attempt Murder of Mona Richardson. The sentences were set to run consecutively.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On October 14, 1973, Mr. Curtis and his co-defendant, Louis Cokes, picked up two girls, 19-year-old Ms. Shepherd and 16-year-old Ms. Richards. Mr. Curtis was driving the car. After driving around for a while, he parked the car near a band shell in Garfield Park, in Chicago. Mr. Curtis and Mr. Cokes ordered the victims to remove their clothes and have sex with them. The victims refused, and Ms. Shepherd was dragged from the car, choked, and shot in the head. Ms. Richards continued to resist for a short while after being shot. Mr. Curtis then slashed and stabbed her in the neck and throat with a broken bottle, while Mr. Cokes held her down with his foot, and, using Mr. Curtis's gun, kept Ms. Richards in the car.

Mr. Cokes then dragged Ms. Richards from the car. Both men beat, slashed, and stabbed her in the throat and neck with the same broken bottle they had used on Ms. Shepherd. Ms. Richards managed to survive the attack and ran to a gas station, where the police were called. In the hospital, she identified both assailants from photographs and stated she had known both of them prior to the attack.

Both attackers were arrested at 1553 S. Kolin, in an apartment leased to Mr. Curtis's mother. A .32 caliber handgun was recovered from the room where Mr. Curtis and Mr. Cokes



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were found. Mr. Curtis admitted he was the owner of the gun. A firearms expert testified that this weapon could have fired the lethal bullet into Ms. Shepherd's head. It was noted that some characteristics of the gun and the murder bullet matched, but there were an insufficient number of individual markings on the mutilated bullet for a conclusive comparison.

Mr. Curtis and Mr. Cokes each appealed their convictions and sentences. The Appellate Court affirmed the convictions, but vacated the sentences, because the sentences did not conform to the statute. On remand, the trial court re-sentenced Mr. Curtis to the same sentences he originally received, but ordered that they run concurrently. The trial court re-sentenced Mr. Cokes to the same sentence that he originally received. On November 1, 1998, Mr. Cokes died while in IDOC.

Mr. Curtis filed a petition for post-conviction relief, alleging that his sentence was unconstitutional and void. The court granted the State's motion to dismiss that petition on December 3, 2008, which was affirmed on appeal. On February 14, 2014, Curtis filed a "Pro Se Motion for Declaratory Judgment"; that motion was summarily dismissed on February 24, 2014, with the dismissal being affirmed on appeal in 2015.

MR. CURTIS'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSES

Mr. Curtis stated in his interview that he did not shoot the gun that killed Ms. Shepherd. His version of the incident is that he was attempting to hold the victim, who was fighting with Ms. Richardson. He stated that Ms. Shepherd stepped in front of him and was shot by Ms. Richardson. Mr. Curtis also claims that they were fighting over a drug deal that went bad, and that he tried to revive the victim. He also stated that cars passed him and the victim, and no one helped.

Mr. Curtis stated that Ms. Shepherd sacrificed her life for him, and he cannot get the day or incident out of his head. He stated that he did the best he could to help her. He also stated that Ms. Richardson had drugs on her when she was at the hospital and was never charged.

Mr. Curtis further stated that all he and Mr. Cokes wanted was to have sex with the two girls, and things got out of control.

PRIOR CRIMINAL HISTORY

July 1970 – Armed Robbery

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Curtis was born in Chicago, Illinois, on November 23, 1951. His mother and father grew up in Georgia and Tennessee, respectively, and met after coming to Chicago in search of work in the 1940s. When Mr. Curtis was six years old, his father, an alcoholic who worked as a



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deliveryman and carpenter, died at age 29 from cirrhosis of the liver. Mr. Curtis's brother Albert also died of cirrhosis in 1995, and his mother died in 1997 at the age of 80. Mr. Curtis has an older sister, Connie, who lives in Georgia. They have a good relationship and exchange letters. Although his family was poor, Mr. Curtis describes a relatively nice childhood growing up on the West Side of Chicago, and, as a boy, he enjoyed building model airplanes and playing with his train set.

Mr. Curtis dropped out of Farragut High School and had little direction as a youth. He worked odd jobs around the neighborhood and spent time in the Audie home for a burglary he committed with some other children when he was about 13 or 14 years old. When Mr. Curtis was 17 years old, he tried to enlist in the Marines, but was unable to do so because he was too young.

His last ticket was September 19, 2019, for not having his identification. He received a verbal reprimand for "insolence" and "disobeying a direct order." Mr. Curtis explained that the infraction occurred because he forgot to bring his identification to the shower area. That was his first ticket in four years, with the previous ticket in 2015 being issued after he refused to bring food to a guard; the guard was subsequently fired for his misconduct.

Mr. Curtis stated that he mostly keeps to himself, and that he has not been involved in any physical altercations while in custody. There is no indication that he was ever affiliated with a gang.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Curtis has been accepted to live at St Leonard's Ministries. After Mr. Curtis was incarcerated for the instant offence, he sought to further his education and obtained his high school diploma. In 2008, he passed the Food Service Sanitation Manager Certification Examination. He also obtained a certificate in food service from Rend Lake College in 2010. Throughout his time in custody, he has worked in various food service jobs, including cook and dishwasher. He developed a love of cooking from his mother, and stated that if he is granted parole, he would like to work in a restaurant.

In his free time, Mr. Curtis enjoys writing and has written a very lengthy autobiography. He finds writing to be very therapeutic. Mr. Curtis is also an avid reader and says that he will read anything that is available. His overall health is good for a man approaching 70. He takes blood pressure medication and exercises when he can. Additionally, Mr. Curtis contracted Covid-19 a few months ago and lost his sense of taste and smell. He feels that he has fully recovered from the virus and is hopeful that the antibodies in his system will ward off a reoccurrence.



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DISCUSSION

Ms. Crigler stated Mr. Curtis has never received a vote in favor of parole. Mr. Curtis did not receive any votes at his last *en banc* hearing in March 2018. April 2021 will be his first *en banc* hearing where he is represented by counsel.

Ms. Crigler stated that she has struggled with this petition for parole. The crime was so brutal and the victims so young. She struggled with the fact that Mr. Curtis insisted that he is innocent, and that the second victim shot and killed Ms. Shepherd over a drug deal that went bad. He claimed that the two victims were fighting, and that he was attempting to break it up. He claimed that Ms. Shepard stepped in front of him, and that Ms. Richards shot her. When asked how both victims were cut around the neck, he had no answer. He was asked what kind of weapon the victims had, and he did not remember; he just kept insisting that Ms. Richards had a lot of heroin on her, that she was never prosecuted for having drugs, and that she made a deal, which is why he was convicted of killing Ms. Shepard. Ms. Crigler stated that she went to records and found that Ms. Richards was charged, but that the charges were dismissed. Mr. Curtis also claimed that he went back and tried to help Ms. Shepard, but there was nothing he could do. He stated he tried to get help, but that no one would help, and that no cars stopped. He also stated that three cars drove by and saw him carrying Ms. Shepard, and no one stopped. The police came and had their guns drawn, and he got out of there.

Ms. Crigler stated that after speaking with Mr. Curtis twice, reviewing the file, and reading the appellate decision, she was convinced that Mr. Curtis has convinced himself that his version of the event and crime of October 14, 1973, is that he did not kill or harm either victim. He has and continues to express his innocence, and that he did not kill or attempt to kill either of the victims.

Mr. Shelton noted that he remembers that the gun used belonged to Mr. Curtis. Ms. Crigler confirmed that the gun found in the apartment belonged to Mr. Curtis, but the bullet recovered had discrepancies in it.

Mr. Ruggiero stated that while the victim was at the hospital, Mr. Curtis went to his mother's home with his codefendant; after being arrested, Mr. Curtis's codefendant had blood on his shoe that matched the blood type of Ms. Shepard.

Ms. Crigler stated that Mr. Curtis testified immediately after being arrested, stating his innocence and that it was a deal gone bad.

Ms. Wilson asked how long Mr. Curtis had been incarcerated. Ms. Crigler noted that Mr. Curtis has been incarcerated for 47 years. Ms. Crigler also noted that she has never voted for Mr. Curtis's parole, and that he has never received any votes in favor of release.



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Ms. Daniels asked the Board whether they see Mr. Curtis as a threat to himself or the community. Ms. Crigler responded that Mr. Curtis does pose a threat because of his psychological defense mechanisms. Ms. Crigler noted that Mr. Curtis remains adamant that Ms. Richards shot Ms. Shepard, but that Ms. Crigler herself cannot see how the wounds inflicted to the victims could have happened, if that were the case. Ms. Crigler insisted that we must protect public safety.

Attorney Klarquist noted that Mr. Curtis wanted the quantity of heroin that Ms. Richards was holding to prove motive for the crime. Based on records, Mr. Curtis knew both Ms. Richards and Ms. Shepard, because he was dating one of their sisters. Attorney Klarquist stated that Mr. Curtis questions if the defense properly showed motive for the murder.

Regarding harm to others, Attorney Klarquist noted that Mr. Curtis has a disciplinary history that shows otherwise. Mr. Curtis has not picked up any tickets in years. Mr. Curtis has received therapy for these offenses. Mr. Curtis disagrees that he is a threat to society. Attorney Klarquist noted that there was only one witness to the crime, and that the codefendant was clearly involved. Attorney Klarquist stated that Mr. Curtis tried to enroll in the Marines, but was turned down because of his age. Attorney Klarquist stated that Mr. Curtis shows motivation. Mr. Curtis is still very healthy, is still working and believes he could be a useful member of society. Attorney Klarquist stated that much time has passed since the incident, and they wish to give Mr. Curtis this opportunity. Ms. Crigler acknowledged that these were all valid points, and that Mr. Curtis had never received a vote. Ms. Crigler then thanked the attorneys for their time. Attorney Rubeo also noted that Mr. Curtis would receive help at St. Leonard's that he could not get at IDOC. Ms. Martinez asked if a psych evaluation would help. Ms. Crigler noted that, in her opinion, Mr. Curtis needs therapy.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (EC—VM). Motion prevails by a vote of 9–3. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, and Mrs. Wilson. Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, and Chairman Findley dissented.

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

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



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION—April 29, 2021

Name: **RICHARD WEST**

IDOC Number: **C72908**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Richard West C72908.

Members present were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Parker Freiburg.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Richard West C72908 is 64 years old, with a date of birth of January 24, 1957. He is serving a sentence of 25–100 years for the murder of his father in 1974. He has been in custody for over 43 years. His projected discharge date is December 16, 2037.

Mr. West was interviewed by Board Member Joe Ruggiero on April 8, 2021, via video, starting at approximately 9:20 am. Mr. West appeared in normal prison uniform. His answers were responsive to questions asked. Also present were Attorneys Carolyn Klarquist and Pamela Rubeo representing Mr. West *pro bono*, along with Mr. West's sister, Phyllis Stratton.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On December 2, 1974, Mr. West was 17 years old. On this date he shot and killed his father, Alphonso West. This murder was planned and executed in a cold and calculated way. A week before the murder, Mr. West asked Bryant Clemons for a ride in exchange for money. Mr. West told Mr. Clemons that he was looking for this dude who was messing with him. Mr. Clemons saw Mr. West go into Mr. West's own home, located at 7608 S. Eggleston Avenue, Chicago, and retrieve a shotgun, which was wrapped in some clothes and a plastic cleaner's bag. Mr. Clemons saw the butt of the gun when Mr. West placed it in the trunk of the car.

The day before the murder, at about 5:30 p.m., Mr. West spoke with two neighborhood men, William Hudson and Ned Smith. Mr. West offered them \$5 for a ride. Mr. Hudson agreed, and Mr. West went into Mr. West's home at 7608 S. Eggleston Avenue, Chicago. Mr. West went into the home and came out with a shotgun, packed in a 3–4-foot-long by 6-inch-wide cardboard box. Mr. West instructed Mr. Hudson to drive around the corner from Mr. West's home to 76th Street, between Eggleston and Normal Street. When Mr. Hudson did this, Mr. West took the shotgun out of the box. Mr. Smith, who was also in the car, asked Mr. West why he had a gun, and Mr. West responded he was "going to bump a guy off". Mr. West said the man for which he



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was looking would be driving into the alley. This was the alley behind Mr. West's home, where he lived with his father. At 6:30 p.m., Mr. West asked for the time and then indicated he had to leave. Mr. Hudson then drove Mr. West around the corner to his home.

The next day, at 5:45 p.m., Mr. West offered another man, Gregory Smith, \$6.00 for a ride. As he did the day before, Mr. West brought out a shotgun in a cardboard box and instructed Mr. Smith to drive around the corner and park by the alley, which went behind Mr. West's home. A short time later, Mr. West took the gun from the box. Mr. West's father, Alphonso West, then drove into said alley. Mr. West got out of the car, threw the box, and walked up to his garage with the shotgun. Mr. West was seen saying something into the garage and pointing the gun into the garage and shooting. Mr. Smith then saw the victim "stumble through the gangway." Mr. West then went back to Mr. Smith's car and was driven around the corner to his home, where Mr. West got out of the car with the shotgun, walked up to his home, and handed the gun to someone. Mr. West then returned to the car. Mr. West told Mr. Smith to drive him to the cleaners, and, if anyone asked, that Mr. Smith should say he gave Mr. West a ride to the cleaners. Mr. West went into the cleaners, picked up some dry cleaning, and Mr. Smith drove Mr. West back to Mr. West's home, whereupon he received \$6.00 from Mr. West.

Within an hour of the shooting, at approximately 6:30 p.m., Chicago Police saw the body of Alphonso West lying in the gangway between two houses at 7608 S. Eggleston. There was a trail of blood from the garage to Mr. West's body. He died at the scene from the gunshot blast to the chest.

Mr. West was arrested six days later for the Murder of his father. Mr. West was found guilty of Murder following a bench trial and was sentenced on July 14, 1977. He was out on bond, but had been confined since being sentenced. He appealed his case upon being convicted.

MR. WEST'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. West continues to maintain his innocence as to the shooting murder of his father and claims he never even possessed a gun in his life.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

September 10, 1974 (less than 3 months before the murder) – Mr. West was arrested for Disorderly Conduct for discharging a shot gun at least 25 times in his backyard.

September 23, 1979 – While serving time in Stateville Correctional Center, Mr. West, along with 12 others, took over the orientation confinement unit. Mr. West was witnessed to be armed with a pipe and assisting in this takeover. He was convicted by a jury of Unlawful Restraint and sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment, consecutive to his Murder sentence.



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November 7, 2002 – Mr. West was 45 years old and found in possession of a homemade knife/ shank. He pled guilty to Unlawful Use of a Weapon and was given 364 days in jail.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Initially, it is hard to imagine an individual in custody with a worse adjustment than Mr. West. A review of his file included well over 120 disciplinary reports prior to February 24, 2001. From 1978–1979, he was constantly put in segregation, due to constantly becoming violent towards guards, including hitting them on multiple occasions; having shanks and pipes on multiple occasions; attacking other individuals in custody; starting a fire; throwing urine at officers; throwing milk; and striking at officers with a pipe.

In the 1980s, Mr. West continued being in segregation for much of the decade, for starting more fires, committing arson, engaging in gang activity, throwing liquids at guards, stabbing officers, striking and assaulting officers repeatedly, fighting, and disobeying officers.

In the 1990s, he continued being violent towards officers. In 1993, he was ticketed for assault and received 1 year of segregation. He was also ticked for intimidation, threats, drugs, gang activity, and assaulting other individuals in custody multiple times.

His violence continued into his 40s and into the new century. Since February 24, 2001, he has been placed in segregation eleven times more for major infractions. His last ticket was in 2017.

Mr. West's last job was from February 2011 to July 2011, due to his history of staff assaults up to August 2012.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. West has no children and is single. He has sisters Phyllis, Lorraine, and Katrina West, along with brothers Al and Steven. Richard is the oldest.

St. Leonard's Ministries indicates they will assist in supporting parole. Mr. West's transition plan is to live with his sister Phyllis in Westmont and attend the College of DuPage.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office has objected every year until this one.

EN BANC HISTORY

No votes in favor of release since first being heard in 1998.



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DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Ms. Crigler asked Mr. West's current age; Mr. West is now 64 years old.

Ms. Martinez stated she had this case last year. Ms. Martinez noted that Mr. West was angry about the State's Attorney being at the hearing. Ms. Martinez told Mr. West that, if he wants to get out, he needs to show effort towards bettering himself. Mr. West said he is not offered anything. Ms. Martinez told Mr. West that there are many opportunities and named a few for him, but Mr. West gives no excuse. Ms. Martinez noted that Mr. West still has a grade on him since he was 17. Mr. West stated he was not part of the plan for the takeover and that he was pushed into it. Ms. Martinez stated Mr. West was a very intelligent man and that the judge gave such a sentence because of the unknown motive and Mr. West's unwillingness to talk about the murder. Mr. West hasn't had visitors since 2005. Three of Mr. West's sisters have masters' degrees. Mr. West does not let his sisters know about any hearings, and when asked why, Mr. West said that he doesn't want to bother his family anymore.

Attorney Pamela Rubeo noted that Mr. West was 17 at the time of offense, and that, while on bond, Mr. West received his GED and attended college classes until his conviction. The law has recently recognized the effect of crime on young brains. Mr. West has maintained his innocence over the years. Mr. West stated he wants to live for the future and not live in the past.

Attorney Rubeo stated that Mr. West indicated verbal and physical abuse at home, but he does not want to cause any more harm. Attorney Rubeo stated that Mr. West's family has always been supportive of him, and that evidence shows that the individual Mr. West handed the shotgun to after the murder was his own mother. Mr. West's sister visits when she can and is looking forward to him being reintegrated into the family. Mr. West's sister does volunteer work and stated that Mr. West would do good volunteer work with her. Attorney Rubeo noted that St. Leonard's House will offer Mr. West mental health counseling and therapy, which he has not been given.

During an interview, Mr. West asked the attorneys why they are helping him. The attorneys believe he has been so pessimistic over the years because he had no hope. Mr. West was in segregation for much of his initial incarceration. Attorney Rubeo noted that segregation has been determined to be detrimental to mental health. Attorney Rubeo stated that Mr. West's record has not been stellar over the past few years, but he has changed his ways; he has greatly mellowed with age and enjoys helping other individuals in custody with their own cases. Attorney Carolyn Klarquist stated that they don't know why this happened, and that they don't know what Mr. West claims as innocence.

Chairman Findley asked if Mr. West showed any aspiration towards anything. Attorney Klarquist noted that Mr. West enjoys helping others with their own cases. Attorney Klarquist



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also noted that Mr. West does a lot of reading and shares any information he can with cellmates and other individuals in custody.

Ms. Daniels asked if Mr. West has a parole plan and the attorney stated that Mr. West has been admitted to St. Leonard's. Mr. West's sister offered her home, but the attorneys told her that Mr. West would do much better at St. Leonard's.

Ms. Crigler asked if anyone knew the motive behind the murder. Attorney Rubeo stated that none of the family claim any information about the incident. The only information noted was that the parents were very strict. Ms. Crigler also asked what part the mother played during the murder. Attorney Rubio noted that the mother was the person who received the shotgun from Mr. West. Attorney Rubio also noted that the neighbors reported the murder and not any of Mr. West's family.

Mr. Shelton and Mr. Ruggiero both asked if the attorneys or anyone has had any discussion as to why Mr. West committed the murder, or if there was any motive. When Mr. West was asked about his father in another hearing, he told Mr. Ruggiero that "it's not important" and that Mr. West "wants to focus on now." The Board inquired whether or not Mr. West had a cellmate, and whether that cellmate had heard any information. Attorney Rubio stated that they think Mr. West does have a cellmate, but that Mr. West discloses nothing. Mr. West only stated to the attorneys that he loved his father and that he understands more now than he did then. Mr. Ruggiero also noted that when he asked about any domestic abuse, both Mr. West and his sister claimed nothing.

Mr. Ruggiero stated to the Board that mental health counseling would be necessary for Mr. West. Mr. West hasn't participated in many programs while incarcerated. Mr. Ruggiero believes Mr. West is in denial, and that that is a factor as to why he is on the fence with his decision to vote for Mr. West. Mr. West has no protestors, and his family is accepting of him, with none of them being fearful. Mr. West has had an adverse effect on institutional discipline. Mr. Ruggiero would like to give his support for Mr. West, but with his past disciplinary record it is difficult.

Ms. Daniels asked what the rationale was regarding Mr. West's acceptance at St. Leonard's. Attorney Rubeo stated that Mr. West was accepted based on his evaluation. Ms. Daniels noted that, in reference to Mr. West's anger and other issues, in her experience the person with issues is often the last to realize they have an issue.

Mr. Shelton asked if Mr. West would be willing to comply with parole agents and parole conditions, if Mr. West is unwilling to answer or cooperate with Board Members during interviews. Attorney Rubeo stated that if Mr. West violates any conditions of parole, then he will return to incarceration, but is confident that Mr. West will comply with any conditions.



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Attorney Rubeo stated that Mr. West believes he is treated differently by the guards, especially if an individual is suspected of having mental health issues. Mr. Ruggiero stated that he tried to question Mr. West during the last interview, but Mr. West cut him off and didn't seem to want help. Attorney Klarquist stated that this is due to Mr. West having a lack of trust. Mr. Ruggiero noted that it sounds like paranoia. Attorney Klarquist says that Mr. West does not trust authority or that he will ever be released. Ms. Martinez says that she thinks Mr. West has never had hope, and that he needs mental health care from St. Leonard's that would not be available in the correctional institutes.

Mr. James asked about what support Mr. West's family would be able to give. Attorney Rubeo stated that Mr. West's sister said that he could live with her, and the family would help integrate Mr. West into technology and society. Attorney Klarquist noted that while the family would like to take in Mr. West, they believe St. Leonard's would be able to better help him.

Ms. Daniels offered one thought towards Mr. West's unwillingness to comply. Ms. Daniels stated that Mr. West is not unwilling to comply, but does not want to talk about something that is very hard to talk about. Ms. Daniels does not think that is the same thing. Ms. Daniels noted that it would be challenging to open up to a stranger about this very difficult time in Mr. West's life and to bear his soul.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (JR—EW). Motion prevails by a vote of 6—6. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Cerda, Mr. James, Mr. Mears, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, and Ms. Wilson. Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Chairman Findley, Ms. Martinez, Mrs. Perkins, and Mrs. Savage dissented.

After thorough consideration of Mr. West's case, the Board voted to deny parole. The Board feels that parole release at this time would not be in the interest of public safety, as there is a substantial risk that Mr. West would not conform to reasonable conditions of parole release, that a grant of parole release would have a substantially adverse effect upon institutional discipline, and that parole release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of the offenses and promote a lack of respect for the law.

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



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION—April 29, 2021

Name: **ANTHONY SEARS**

IDOC Number: **A92942**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Anthony Sears A92942.

Members present were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Parker Freiburg.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Anthony Sears A92942 was interviewed via WebEx on March 10, 2021, with Board Member Perkins, Attorney Jennifer Soble, and members of Mr. Sears's family present. Mr. Sears is currently housed at Dixon Correctional Center, where he has resided since February 27, 2019. Mr. Sears was serving a Natural Life Without Parole sentence, before being granted a Commutation of Sentence by Governor JB Pritzker, allowing him to come before this Board to seek release on parole.

Mr. Sears's childhood was marked by abandonment, neglect, and disruption. When Mr. Sears was 7 years old, his parents left him and his siblings with his paternal grandparents. His grandparents raised him in their apartment on the lower South Side of Chicago, and neither mother nor father were present in his life after that point. Although his grandparents did the best they could, Mr. Sears had seven other siblings, and he was often in trouble both in and out of school. In an attempt to help provide for his family, he would steal from the supermarket, hoping to bring food home for his siblings. In order to cope with the challenges that surrounded him, Mr. Sears began using drugs. Middle school is where his real problems began. He started getting into trouble for stealing and fighting, and he was sent to a juvenile detention center. After he was released, he went to his local high school for a year, then back to the detention center, and then was sent to an alternative school for the rest of High School.

He attended school through 12th grade, but never received his diploma. He tried hard to succeed, but was not given adequate support; nor did he have access to resources he needed to develop healthy coping mechanisms for his behavioral difficulties. Despite his earlier challenges, Mr. Sears took a class for auto mechanics at a local junior college, worked for People's Gas Company, and subsequently worked as a cleaner and in-house demolition for condemned properties. Mr. Sears also earned his Commercial Driver's License and worked driving elderly and handicapped people. Mr. Sears tried to do better for himself, but failures and traumas of his past caught up to him. He first went to prison, at age 17, in 1979.



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After Mr. Sears was released from prison in the early 1990s, he married a kind, highly-educated woman, and had steady employment through friends. They bought a big house and were expecting a baby, when Mr. Sears was driving with a friend, and they got pulled over by the police. Due to his background, Mr. Sears was implicated in criminal activity that his friend was involved with, but that he knew nothing about.

Although the case against Mr. Sears was thrown out, he continued to get pulled over by police, and was fired from his job after the police contacted his employers. Mr. Sears began to feel that no matter how hard he tried, all of his good choices were compromised by the stigma of his prior mistakes. Mr. Sears, now jobless, became increasingly panicked about providing for his pregnant wife and managing their swelling mortgage. Not long after he lost his job, his wife gave birth to their son, who died at the hospital soon after birth. Mr. Sears was deeply affected by the death of their son. He and his wife grew apart, each coping with grief in their own way. Facing spiraling debt, along with his inability to find work and meet the expectations of those around him, Mr. Sears grew increasingly despondent. It was around this time that the instant offense occurred.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On March 4, 1997, at 5344 S. Harlem, in Summit, Illinois, Mr. Sears entered the Shell Gas Station and approached the counter area, where the two female victims were working. Mr. Sears pulled a scarf over his face, pulled out a handgun, and jumped over the counter. Mr. Sears pointed the gun at the victims and ordered them to remove the money from the registers and put it in a bag. The victims placed approximately \$500.00 into a bag. Then he ordered them into a back room. Mr. Sears then exited the gas station and was observed by a witness getting into a car that had a piece of cardboard over the license plate.

A video camera recorded the armed robbery. Police responding to the car observed Mr. Sears's vehicle approximately four blocks from the Gas station. When the squad car pulled behind Mr. Sears's vehicle, he fled at a high rate of speed through a residential neighborhood. Mr. Sears eventually jumped from his moving vehicle and fled on foot.

Mr. Sears was apprehended as he fled on foot. A loaded gun was recovered from a yard next to where Mr. Sears was ultimately detained. The gun and Mr. Sears were identified as the weapon and individual who robbed the Gas Station by the victims. This robbery made Mr. Sears a "habitual criminal," and he was sentenced to Natural Life Without Parole.

The State's Attorney stated that Mr. Sears is a career criminal, and that in the last 20 years he has spent approximately a total of only 26 months out of custody.



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CRIMINAL HISTORY

October 1977 – Burglary; May 1978 – Armed Robbery/Attempt Robbery; August 1982 – Home Invasion; October 1990 – Robbery; August 6, 1993 – Residential Burglary; August 4, 1995 – numerous misdemeanors.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Sears has been incarcerated more than 23 years. These years have given him the opportunity to remain sober and become committed to his family, as well as give him a desire to be a better person. Mr. Sears suffers from a back injury sustained in 2007 and has subsequently been diagnosed with severe spinal lumbar stenosis and degenerative disc disease. Mr. Sears also takes medication for high blood pressure, nerve pain, enlarged prostate, high cholesterol, heart disease, and has a renal cyst.

Mr. Sears has received 6 major tickets and 2 minor tickets since March 22, 2001. His overall adjustment has been very good. Mr. Sears was precluded from engaging in classes and jobs for the majority of his incarceration, due to his Natural Life sentence. Mr. Sears filled his time with many Bible classes, and he engages in daily prayer and religious study. Mr. Sears has been housed at Stateville and Dixon.

Mr. Sears uses a cane to walk short distances and relies on a wheelchair for anything beyond a brief walk; he further requires a special low bunk, in order to get into bed due to his failing health. Mr. Sears is currently in A grade, medium security, and is classified as a moderate escape risk due to his Natural Life sentence.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Sears has a solid parole plan. He proposes to leave Illinois for Arizona with his wife and family, who are all waiting to welcome him home if he is paroled. His interstate compact has already been approved.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Daniels stated that none of Mr. Sears's Home Invasion or Armed Robbery cases were violent; he never hurt anyone. He is very remorseful for those he may have hurt and says he is very sorry.

Mr. Shelton asks if there would be a 3-year release term, due to the length of the sentence and the habitual criminal designation. The Board noted that Mr. Sears's parole term could be a lifetime term. Mr. Ruggiero stated that Mr. Sears was 18 during his Burglary, and that, while he was out on bond, Mr. Sears approached a couple high school girls with a knife and stole their purses. Mr. Sears then approached a woman and robbed her at knife point. At 23 years of age,



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Mr. Sears tied a woman up and robbed her; in less than a month after getting out, he stole a car. Mr. Sears was released at 34 years of age, and was arrested for Burglary within four months.

Mr. Ruggiero noted that Mr. Sears was continually recommitted. Mr. Ruggiero noted that Mr. Sears is a 60-year-old man still getting assault tickets. Attorney Soble addressed the assault tickets, stating that when Mr. Sears moved to Dixon Correctional Center, he was attacked early on by younger individuals in custody and got into an altercation. Attorney Soble noted that this was an isolated incident. Regarding one of the tickets, Mr. Sears was told by a correctional officer that he was in the wrong medicine line. Mr. Sears was, in fact, in the correct line, however the correctional officer was new, and when Mr. Sears argued with him, Mr. Sears received a ticket.

Attorney Soble stated that if Mr. Sears were to be prosecuted today, he would not receive a Natural Life Without Parole sentence, since he was under 21 at the time of two of his crimes. It should also be noted that, in the case in 1999, Mr. Sears bought a car from a friend, and the car turned out to be stolen. Attorney Soble stated that the victim of the Burglary case said that Mr. Sears was very polite during the event. Attorney Soble noted that Mr. Sears's family has stated that they will support him and are willing to take him into their homes. Attorney Soble stated that Mr. Sears is very remorseful for what he has done. Mr. Sears was under a lot of stress at the time. Mr. Sears had three children, a pregnant wife, and had lost his job; when he lost his fourth child shortly after birth, it sent Mr. Sears over the edge. Grief of this magnitude cannot be understated. For Mr. Sears, it made it almost impossible to maintain a grip, while trying to maintain his life.

Attorney Soble stated that, if paroled, Mr. Sears will live with his wife with the help of his children. Mr. Sears will renew his CDL in order to retain employment. Mr. Sears has created a rich educational and religious life while incarcerated. Mr. Sears has taken many Bible study courses and will find his church home in Arizona, if he were to be paroled. Ms. Wilson asked if getting a CDL will be possible with Mr. Sears's past convictions. Attorney Soble noted that it will be no problem, and that delivery service is one of the best ways for formerly incarcerated persons to make a living. Mr. Cerda noted that Mr. Sears does express remorse and sorrow for his victims. Ms. Crigler stated that out West there is a need for drivers with CDLs.

Mrs. Savage asked if Mr. Sears hurt anyone during his crimes, and Mrs. Perkins assured that Mr. Sears hurt no one.



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DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to grant parole (AP—JM). Motion prevails by a vote of 11–1. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley. Mr. Ruggiero dissented.

After a complete review of Mr. Sears’s case, and after giving thoughtful discussion and consideration to all factors, the Board decided and voted to grant parole to Mr. Sears, subject to conditions of parole release as set by the Board and by law. The Board hereby finds that Mr. Sears is an appropriate candidate for parole release at this time.

“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 29, 2021

Name: **GERALD CHATMAN**

IDOC Number: **C61397**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Gerald Chatman C61397.

Members present were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Parker Freiburg.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Gerald Chatman C61397 is 81 years old and resides at Big Muddy River Correctional Center. He was interviewed on March 16, 2021, via videoconference, with no other participants. This interview lasted less than 5 minutes, as Mr. Chatman did not participate in the discussion; the interview ended abruptly, when Mr. Chatman asked for the guard to take him back to his cell. Mr. Chatman did not submit any documentation to be considered for his parole to share with Board. Therefore, the only points of discussion were from the records in Mr. Chatman's file.

MR. CHATMAN'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSES

Mr. Chatman previously acknowledged that that he did sexually assault multiple women in 1957, as well as in 1975, when he was interviewed by the Board in 2018. It was during that interview that he also stated that he threatened women and their children at knifepoint during the commission of some of the crimes. When he was asked about his failure to participate in structured therapy, Mr. Chatman's response was that he has analyzed himself.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Chatman was in and out of the juvenile detention system, stemming from 9 separate attacks and 7 documented sexual assaults, with convictions for two of the sexual assaults at the age of 18. He was originally sentenced to 150 years, although he was later resentenced to 60 years.

Mr. Chatman was paroled for these crimes on June 4, 1975, only to sexually assault another woman 53 days later, as well as 3 others. Ultimately, he would be convicted on two of these attacks, which he is now incarcerated for. Mr. Chatman received 50–150-year sentence for Deviate Sexual Assault in the first of these convictions. He received a 50–150-year sentence for



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Sexual Assault, as well as a 10–30-year sentence for Robbery in the second conviction. His parole for the crimes in 1957 was revoked.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

At this time, Mr. Chatman has spent 63 years total in prison. Per the SPIN assessment in 2016, he has not done much to further his education or acquire skill sets to be employed. From this assessment, and his last appearance before this Board, there is no record of Mr. Chatman previously having received any Sex Offender Counseling.

Previously, Mr. Chatman assured the Board that his prior criminal behaviors were the results of impulses that he could not control at the time—but which he claims he can now control.

In his 2016 SPIN Assessment, it is also noted that, a year earlier, Mr. Chatman stabbed his cellmate. There was no other documentation about this incident, and Mr. Chatman was not able to be questioned about it. The Assessment also stated that Mr. Chatman is at high risk to re-offend.

Mr. Chatman has no children and was never married. He still had a sister he was in contact with in 2016.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Chatman did not present a parole plan.

DISCUSSION

Mr. James noted that Mr. Chatman has no one on his behalf and that he has not pursued education or counseling.

Chairman Findley asked if Mr. Chatman has done anything for his credit, and Mr. James stated that it seems Mr. Chatman has not.

Ms. Crigler asked how old Mr. Chatman was, and Mr. James stated that Mr. Chatman is now 80 years of age. Ms. Crigler also asked about Mr. Chatman's parole plan, and Mr. James stated that Mr. Chatman did not provide one.

Mr. James stated that Mr. Chatman claims that he has matured, though Mr. James does not know through which pathway Mr. Chatman has done this. Mr. James noted that, during other times that Mr. Chatman has appeared before the Board, there was not much information available on those occasions either.



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Ms. Martinez stated that she had asked Mr. Chatman about sex offender counseling in a previous interview, and Mr. Chatman told her that he had talked to other participants; he subsequently decided that he did not want to attend, and that he had analyzed himself.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (OJ—DS). Motion prevails by a vote of 12–0.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Chatman’s case, the Board voted to deny parole. The Board feels that parole release at this time would not be in the interest of public safety, as there is a substantial risk that Mr. Chatman would not conform to reasonable conditions of parole release, that a grant of parole release would have a substantially adverse effect upon institutional discipline, and that parole release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of the offenses and promote a lack of respect for the law.

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



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION—April 29, 2021

Name: **DUANE FRANKLIN**

IDOC Number: **C80688**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Duane Franklin C80688.

Members present were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Parker Freiburg.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Mr. Franklin is housed at Menard Correctional Center. Mr. Franklin was interviewed by Board Member Lisa Daniels on March 17, 2021. No one else was present for the interview.

Mr. Franklin is classified as a Maximum Security and Moderate Escape Risk, and is currently on A Grade. Mr. Franklin was born on October 27, 1948, and was 73 years old at the time of his interview. His original convictions were for Murder and Rape (200–600 years) and Burglary (6–20 years), to run concurrently. Mr. Franklin comes before the Board on this occasion following a 2-year set.

At the time of the scheduled interview, institutional staff advised that Mr. Franklin had recently been diagnosed with Dementia and on this day was being uncooperative, consequently arriving approximately 15 minutes late. Upon arrival, Mr. Franklin presented as adversarial and remained uncooperative, refusing to be properly sworn in; when asked if he was willing to discuss the events leading to his conviction, he stated he didn't remember. As a result of this, Mr. Franklin's institutional hearing lasted approximately 12 minutes.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On June 10, 1976, the body of Susan Greer was found naked from the waist down in her apartment at 2616 N. Hampden Court in Chicago, IL. An examination of her body and subsequent autopsy revealed severe and massive injuries, including lacerations inside her vagina, lacerations inside her rectum, abrasions to her nose and eyes, large abrasions to her right temple and chin, abrasions and ligature marks on her neck, deep lacerations on both wrists to the bone, fractured or crushed major bones in her neck, and massive hemorrhaging in her brain. The pathologists determined the cause of death to be asphyxia due to strangulation, in association with severe trauma to the brain. A forensic examination also revealed sperm present in her vagina.



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Upon discovery of her body, the police conducted a canvas of the victim's apartment building. Two witnesses were found who observed Mr. Franklin in the building at the time of the murder, and who knew him. When questioned by those witnesses, Mr. Franklin explained his reason for being in the building as looking for a mutual friend, James Cooke. The witnesses were aware that Mr. Franklin knew Mr. Cooke, who had previously moved out of the building. The night before, on June 9th, other residents of Ms. Greer's apartment building admitted a man identified as Mr. Franklin into the building from their door buzzers. Mr. Franklin stated that he was looking for Mr. Cooke, and was told that night that he no longer lived there. Early the next morning, Mr. Franklin returned to Ms. Greer's apartment and was again told by one of the residents that Mr. Cooke had moved out. Twenty minutes later, Mr. Franklin was seen outside Ms. Greer's apartment door.

The police spoke with Mr. Cooke and were informed that he had personally told Mr. Franklin that Mr. Cooke had moved from the building at 2616 N. Hampden Court, and that he had sublet his apartment to a single girl. Mr. Franklin was placed under arrest, and his clothes were found to be covered with type "AB" blood, the same as the victim and different from Mr. Franklin's. Traces of blood were found in scrapings from Mr. Franklin's fingernails. He also had blood and semen stains on his underwear, as well as blood all over his socks.

Mr. Franklin chose to have a trial by jury. The jury found him guilty of Murder, Rape and Burglary. On February 27, 1978, he was sentenced by the Honorable Judge James M. Bailey to 200–600 years in prison on the Murder and Rape convictions and 6–20 years on the Burglary conviction. All sentences were to run concurrently.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Franklin's current conviction is the result of an offense committed while on parole for a rape conviction from August 13, 1970. For that crime, Mr. Franklin was sentenced to an indeterminate sentence of 5–15 years in IDOC. After serving 5 years, Mr. Franklin was released on parole. In December 1975, while on parole from the 1970 conviction, Mr. Franklin was arrested and charged with the sexual assault and beating of a girl in Wheaton, IL, after being identified by the victim. This case, however, was ultimately dismissed because the victim refused to testify.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Since 2000, Mr. Franklin has accrued 23 disciplinary reports, with the most recent occurring in 2019, for assault. There is no evidence in Mr. Franklin's file of any personal or professional development throughout his time of incarceration. After his February 2019 appearance before the Board, a request for Psychiatric Evaluation was submitted. The Evaluation was completed on December 14, 2020.

Mr. Franklin's last visit was on April 18, 2017, with his sister.



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PAROLE PLANS

Currently, Mr. Franklin has no solid parole plan or viable host site options.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office previously opposed the granting of parole for this petitioner.

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Ms. Crigler asked how long Mr. Franklin had been incarcerated. Ms. Daniels noted that Mr. Franklin had been incarcerated for 46 years.

Ms. Daniels also noted that Mr. Franklin received a psych evaluation in December of 2020.

Attorney Jennifer Soble stated she is unable to represent Mr. Franklin at this time, due to his mental state, and that there will be plans moving forward to represent Mr. Franklin when restrictions are lifted. Mr. Shelton asked if there was a mental health clinic near Menard, and Attorney Soble noted that there is one, however it is not through IDOC.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (DB—VM). Motion prevails by a vote of 12–0.

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

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



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Craig Findley, Chairman

***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION—April 29, 2021

Name: **RUDY BELL**

IDOC Number: **C81714**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Rudy Bell C81714.

Members present were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Parker Freiburg.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

Rudy Bell C81714 was born on September 1, 1951, and he is 69 years old. He is serving a sentence of 100–200 years for the 1977 murder of Tyrone Smith. Mr. Bell has been incarcerated over 42 years. His projected discharge date is August 25, 2071.

On March 3, 2021, Mr. Bell was interviewed by Board Member Joe Ruggiero at Hill Correctional Center in Galesburg via videoconference. Present for the interview were Joe Dusek, Mr. Bell's attorney, and Angela Bell, Mr. Bell's daughter. The interview started at 9:07 a.m., with both Mr. Bell and Ms. Bell being sworn in. He was cordial and responsive to questions put to him. During this interview he discussed his family, parole plans, institutional adjustment, criminal history and the offense for which he is incarcerated.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

During the early morning hours of April 2, 1977, the victim, Mr. Smith, returned home from the airport, where he picked up his aunt. He was accompanied by his mother as well as his girlfriend, LaDonna Dixon, and Ms. Dixon's child. They arrived at the victim's house, at 7948 S. Union in Chicago, at approximately 2:30 a.m. While standing in front of his house, the victim shouted to the driver of an approaching automobile to turn on the car's headlights. At this point, Mr. Bell, his co-defendant, and others exited the car and shot and killed Mr. Smith in front of his family members.

Witnesses Audrianna Thomas and her friend, Robert Anderson, were standing a few doors north of 7948 S. Union when the shooting occurred. Ms. Thomas saw four people get out of a dark blue car when it pulled alongside the victim's car. She then saw guns go off and recognized Mr. Bell, then age 25, and his co-defendant Orville Miller as two individuals whom she knew from the neighborhood. Additionally, extraction markings on shells found near Mr.



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Smith's body were compared to similar markings on shells found at Mr. Bell's (his parents') home. Ballistic experts concluded that they matched.

Mr. Bell was a member of the Moorish Americans street gang, which grew out of the Blackstone Rangers, headed by the notorious Jeff Fort. Mr. Bell was also a high-ranking member and enforcer for the El Rukns, Mr. Bell's street gang.

The State's Attorney's Office was well aware of the El Rukns' efforts to intimidate Ms. Thomas and prevent her from testifying against Mr. Bell. She was therefore placed into protective custody in the weeks leading up to the trial, which was set for early September 1977. The defense attorney persuaded the trial judge to have Ms. Thomas produced for a pre-trial interview. For her safety, the interview was to be held at the State's Attorney's Office on September 1, 1977.

Despite the government's attempt to relocate and protect Ms. Thomas's whereabouts around the time this case was pending in court, the El Rukns persisted in their attempt to intimidate her to not testify throughout the Summer of 1977. El Rukn General Derrick Porter was acting as the defense attorneys' "paralegal". He paid Ms. Thomas to leave Illinois and instead go to California. When she returned prematurely, Mr. Porter and other El Rukns held her against her will for over a week in the Crest Hotel at 67th Street and South Stony Island Avenue. After Ms. Thomas eluded them, it became apparent that she would not be intimidated. Attorney Swano provided the El Rukns with police reports and discovery that listed her home address, and Mr. Fort ordered her killed to protect Mr. Bell and Mr. Miller.

At approximately 6:30 a.m. on September 1, 1977, El Rukn hitmen William Doyle, an associate of Mr. Bell, along with Henry Andrews, George Carter, and Teddy Parrish, followed a car believed to contain Ms. Thomas from her house on S. Wentworth Ave. Mr. Andrews and Mr. Carter were Mr. Bell's cousins, and they and Mr. Doyle were members of Mr. Bell's faction of the El Rukns. However, the car they followed from Ms. Thomas's house was being driven by Rowena James, Ms. Thomas's sister. Ms. James was with her mother, father, and young son.

The car containing the El Rukns drove up next to Ms. James while she was stopped at a stoplight at 98th Street and South Wentworth. Mr. Doyle executed Ms. James by shooting her in the head twice with a shotgun, in the mistaken belief that she was the witness who was to testify against Mr. Bell. Ms. Thomas was informed of her sister's execution later that morning, while awaiting the interview in the State's Attorney's Office.

The next day, the Chicago Police Department executed a search warrant on the El Rukn headquarters at 3939 S. Drexel Boulevard. This headquarters was referred to as "The Fort" by the El Rukns. It was fortified with iron doors, barred windows, and armed members of the El Rukns. Police executed their search warrant and discovered a copy of the Chicago Police Department's Tyrone Smith homicide file in one of the of the rooms of The Fort. This supported the investigators' theory that the murder of Ms. James was connected to the murder of Mr.



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Smith, and that the intended target in the Rowena James murder was, in fact, Ms. Thomas, the eyewitness in Mr. Bell's case.

Despite what Mr. Bell's allies did to her sister, Ms. Thomas still testified at trial. She was also terrified about the well-being of her daughter, Bonnie Bell. At a post-trial hearing held in court, multiple gang members attended. One of them was stopped and arrested. He was found to be in possession of a photo of Ms. Bell, the daughter of Ms. Thomas. It was located in the gang member's wallet, along with the out-of-State phone number of Ms. Thomas.

In a letter to this Board on December 6, 2016, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois stated:

"The Tyrone Smith/ Rowena James murders are two of the most infamous of the many dozens of killings carried out by members of the El Rukn Organization in the 1970s and 1980s. Rudy Bell has never expressed any remorse for the Smith murder. Bell was a hardened killer in 1977 and there is no evidence that has changed. He remains a danger to society."

Under the Federal RICO Act, Mr. Doyle was convicted of the Murder of Ms. James and Conspiracy to Commit Murder of Ms. Thomas. It has always been the prosecution's theory that Ms. James was mistaken for her sister, Ms. Thomas, and that the El Rukns meant to eliminate the witness to Mr. Smith's murder.

MR. BELL'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSES

Mr. Bell claims he is innocent of this offense, and that he will not lie to the Board by admitting any involvement.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Bell was 25 years old at the time of this Murder and had previously been arrested 30 times using several alias names. Mr. Bell has a lengthy criminal history, including four previous arrests for murder or attempted murder, for which he was found not guilty or the charges were ultimately dismissed or not prosecuted. It was mentioned in previous presentations that, due to Mr. Bell's street gang affiliation, it may be reasonable to believe that witnesses were intimidated from testifying against him.

Additional arrests include two arrests for intimidation, seven arrests for battery or aggravated battery, five arrests for robbery or armed robbery, six arrests for UUW, along with additional arrests for attempt burglary, criminal damage to property, criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, and possession of cannabis.



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INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Bell is A grade, in medium security, and is a moderate escape risk. He is currently unassigned.

Mr. Bell has a 12th grade education. He takes advantage of the recreation time allotted and assists other individuals in custody in lifting weights and bodybuilding. He received a janitorial certificate and one from the tailor shop at Stateville. He was involved in a program in 1980–1981 at Pontiac mentoring children. He stated he has been a mentor to many individuals in custody over the years.

IDOC records describe Mr. Bell as having made a good adjustment to incarceration. Although he has stated in the past that he gave up the gang life about 10 years after he was incarcerated, there is no official denouncement in IDOC records.

In terms of his disciplinary history, Mr. Bell has received approximately 105 disciplinary tickets since his incarceration. His last ticket was at the end of 2020, for jamming his door lock. He has multiple reports which include Gang Activity (1996, 1982, & 2006). Mr. Bell continues to violate rules, receiving multiple tickets in 2020.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Bell keeps in contact with his siblings, mother, and cousins through the phone and via letters. He is limited in regard to actual visits because of COVID, as well as the fact he is in Hill Correctional Center in Galesburg.

Mr. Bell stated that his plan is to live in a halfway house or with his daughter until an interstate compact is approved for him to live with his mother in her apartment in Florida.

OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

Mr. Smith's family has expressed strong protests against his release, as well as fear of their names being revealed; they are very scared of Mr. Bell.

EN BANC HISTORY

Mr. Bell has been heard by the Board 26 times since 1986. He received no votes in favor of release on April 25, 2019, followed by six votes in favor of release on August 26, 2020, (Daniels, Crigler, Wilson, Dunn, Harris, and Perkins).



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DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Motion to enter Closed Session to discuss confidential and privileged victims' statements (CF – VM). Leave.

Motion to return to Open Session (EC – DS). Leave.

Ms. Wilson asked about the file found in the house. Mr. Ruggiero answered that it was a file from the attorney that was found in the El Rukn headquarters.

Ms. Martinez noted that the tickets in 2020 were for jamming a door and for comments that resulted in a verbal reprimand.

Mr. Cerda remarked regarding renouncing gangs. He noted that it does happen, but not too often, and it is fair to note that just because it may not be documented by Illinois Department of Corrections does not mean that the individual did not leave the gang.

Attorney Dusek stated that Mr. Bell's judgement was two to three times longer than normal murder charges. Attorney Dusek has attempted an interstate compact for Mr. Bell, but was informed that could not happen until after parole was granted. Mr. Bell has expressed great remorse and has always maintained his innocence. Attorney Dusek noted that the murders happened forty years ago, and that Mr. Bell is still in prison and may not feel safe releasing any information about the cases. Attorney Dusek noted that, in the past twenty years, Mr. Bell has not had many tickets.

Mr. Shelton stated that he pulled important information about raw data from Mr. Bell's master file. It shows that Mr. Bell has submitted numerous grievances. On December 30, 2018, Mr. Bell demanded one hundred dollars per day because he believed he was permitted to drink contaminated water. Mr. Bell noted in the grievance that the Environmental Protection Agency has admitted to water in the area not passing the lead standard. Mr. Shelton also stated that there was a grievance in which Mr. Bell demanded thirty thousand dollars in compensation and one hundred thousand dollars in punitive damages for not having a dental hygienist. Mr. Shelton noted that this tells a lot about the mind of Mr. Bell. Mr. Shelton stated that most people will not hear about these files because they are only in the master file.

Chairman Findley asks Attorney Dusek if he is aware of these grievances and Mr. Dusek says that he was not aware of any specifics.

Ms. Crigler stated that the Department of Corrections is not the best place, nor is it in the best shape, but that Mr. Bell was not expecting to gain anything from these grievances. Ms.



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Crigler noted that water everywhere is not the greatest but does not think these grievances are indicative of Mr. Bell's mental state.

Ms. Bell stated that she knows the heart of Mr. Bell. She stated that she was 5 years old when her father, Mr. Bell, was arrested, and that she is now 49. Ms. Bell stated that Mr. Bell worked at a steel mill before being arrested. Ms. Bell remembers how her father would still parent her the best he could through visits and over the phone, teaching her to respect her peers and herself. Ms. Bell told the Board that she had worked for Southwest for the past 15 years and wrote a children's book. Ms. Bell stated that everyone makes mistakes and that we all deserve a second chance. She stated that Mr. Bell is now 70 years old and has more years behind him than in front, and that she wants to help her dad any way she can. Ms. Bell has asked that Mr. Bell be allowed to come live with her. Mr. Bell mentors other individuals in custody to become productive citizens. Ms. Bell stated that Mr. Bell is very remorseful and wants to help change others' mindsets. Ms. Bell thanked the Board for their time.

Mr. Ruggiero stated that killing a witness is one of the worst things a person can do, almost worse than killing a police officer. Mr. Ruggiero stated that Mr. Bell offended Mr. Ruggiero by lying to his face, by saying that Mr. Bell knew nothing about what was going on in the gang with these crimes.

Ms. Martinez stated that, given interstate compact is not available, she would feel better about Mr. Bell going to a halfway house first for better supervision.

Attorney Dusek says he was told by Hill Correctional Center that they do not do interstate compact until after the individual in custody is approved for parole.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (DS—JR). Motion prevails by a vote of 7–5. Members voting in favor of the motion were Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley. Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, and Mrs. Perkins dissent.

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

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



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***EN BANC* MINUTE SHEET**
OPEN SESSION—April 29, 2021

Name: **DAVID LOTT**

IDOC Number: **C56165**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on April 29, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for David Lott C56165.

Members present were Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mrs. Savage, Mr. Shelton, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Parker Freiburg.

PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE

On July 28, 1974, David Lott C56165 and his co-defendant, Willie Cotton, shot and killed two men, Walter McDowell and Roscoe Gilmer, in a parking lot of a liquor store in East St. Louis, Illinois, following a dispute with two alleged drug dealers. Mr. Lott was found guilty of the two Murders and on November 26, 1975, was sentenced to two consecutive terms of 150–300 years in the penitentiary. He was also convicted of Aggravated Battery/Great Bodily Harm and sentenced to 4 years, for attacking a correctional officer while incarcerated at Pontiac Correctional Center.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On the evening of July 28, 1974, the two victims, Mr. McDowell and Mr. Gilmer, were in a package liquor store in East St. Louis, Illinois. Mr. Lott and his co-conspirator, Mr. Cotton, were also in the liquor store. Mr. Lott and Mr. Cotton left the store before the victims and were observed getting into the victims' car. After everyone had gotten into the car, witnesses heard a single gunshot, followed by two more gunshots. The victims' bodies were found on the street, close to the liquor store. The bullets removed from Mr. McDowell were traced back to a gun belonging to Mr. Lott. Mr. Lott admitted to the jailer that he shot the passenger because "he was old and the driver because he begged for his life. "

Mr. Lott was convicted of 2 counts of Murder in St. Clair County. He received 100–300 years for each case, to be served consecutively.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

July 26, 1976 – Agg. Battery/Great Bodily Harm – 6 Years



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MR. LOTT'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

Mr. Lott acknowledges his involvement in the crime and admits that he was the shooter. He does not dispute the basic facts of the case. Mr. Lott claims that this was a gang/drug incident; he indicated that the parties involved were all drug dealers, and that he was protecting his turf.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Between 2000 and 2013, Mr. Lott received 64 disciplinary tickets. He was found not culpable in two instances; another was dropped in full; he was ultimately found to have committed disciplinary infractions in 61 of the tickets.

According to his file, Mr. Lott's institutional adjustment has been poor. A majority of his tickets have been for assaults of staff and other individuals in custody. He has shown some improvement in recent years. His last ticket was in January of 2013. When asked why he received so many tickets, he said that he did not care about getting tickets because of his age. According to Mr. Lott, he doesn't get tickets anymore because "people change," and he noted that he has grown-up since 2013.

He has attended 38 certificate courses, including anger management.

His institutional status is A-Grade, minimum security, and low risk for escape.

Both of Mr. Lott's parents are deceased. He had five siblings, with one sister and a brother still living. He is the father of four children (one deceased). He never married. He finished high school and attended Mortuary Science School in both Arkansas and Chicago. He received his license and worked as a Mortician from 1968–1974.

Mr. Lott's last visit was in 2011, from a niece. If paroled, he claims that he would live with his brother.

PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Lott has Glaucoma, is legally blind, and can't work. He requires a helper. He has no parole plan.

EN BANC HISTORY

Mr. Lott has been eligible for parole since 1995. He has been denied parole on 18 prior occasions.



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DISCUSSION

Ms. Wilson stated that Mr. Lott does not have a parole plan. He claims that he will live with his brother, but there is no evidence to support that in his file. She could not find any documentation in his file that his brother had agreed to let him live with him, nor did she see anything in his file to indicate that his brother had visited/communicated with him in recent years. Ms. Wilson stated that Mr. Lott contradicted himself in his February 5, 2021, Offender Overview, as it indicates that he plans to parole to a halfway house upon release.

Ms. Wilson also stated that she had viewed a letter that was sent from Mr. Lott and was received by Mr. Slattery. It was a very threatening handwritten letter from Mr. Lott.

Chairman Findley stated that if a parole plan were presented in the future, it could change how the Board would view Mr. Lott's release.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (EW—AP). Motion prevails by a vote of 12–0.

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

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