



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

**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET**  
**OPEN SESSION—December 12, 2019**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at Room 212, State Capitol Building, 301 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois, on December 12, 2019, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following offenders:

<b>C15289</b>	<b>BRUCE SHARP</b>
<b>C70122</b>	<b>ROBERT GORHAM</b>
<b>C66348</b>	<b>ROY KING</b>
<b>C81919</b>	<b>MICHAEL HENDERSON</b>
<b>C82540</b>	<b>LARRY KURENA</b>
<b>C80186</b>	<b>RONNIE CARRASQUILLO</b>

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Findley.

Roll call was taken by Recording Secretary Janet Crane.

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Mr. Daniel Brink	X	
Ms. Edith Crigler	X	
Ms. Lisa Daniels	X	
Mr. Salvador Diaz		X
Mr. Donald Wayne Dunn	X	
Mr. Pete Fisher	X	
Ms. Vonetta Harris	X	
Mr. Oreal James	X	
Ms. Virginia Martinez	X	
Mrs. Aurthur Mae Perkins		X
Mr. Joseph Ruggiero	X	
Mr. Donald Shelton	X	
Mr. Ken Tupy	X	
Ms. Eleanor Kaye Wilson	X	
Chairman Craig Findley	X	

13 Members Present

The Recording Secretary presented the November 21, 2019, Open Session Minutes for approval.



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Motion to approve Open Session Minutes from **November 21, 2019**. (EC—KT). Leave.

The case of Roy King was continued to the next *en banc* hearing date of the Board.

Motion to enter Closed Session to discuss confidential and privileged victims' statements in all remaining scheduled cases. (CF—DS). Leave.

Motion to return to Open Session. (CF—DS). Leave.

The Board heard and voted upon the scheduled cases as detailed in the individual case minutes.

Meeting was adjourned (CF—DS). Leave.



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Inmate Name: **BRUCE SHARP**

IDOC Number: **C15289**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at Room 212, State Capitol Building, 301 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois, on December 12, 2019, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Bruce Sharp C15289.

Members present were Mr. Brink, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Fisher, Ms. Harris, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Janet Crane.

**PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE**

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

On June 19, 1970, at 1:30 a.m., Bruce Sharp C15289, William Redwine, Bradley Green, Dwight Cavin, and Jerome Amos were riding in Mr. Redwine's car. At 74<sup>th</sup> and Union, they saw the marked police car of Officer Kenneth Kaner of the 7<sup>th</sup> District of the Chicago Police Department. Someone in the group said, "let's get him," and/or "let's get his gun." Mr. Sharp, armed with a sawed-off shotgun, Mr. Redwine, armed with a .38 caliber Smith and Wesson revolver, and Mr. Cavin left the car and approached the parked squad car of Officer Kaner. At the time, Officer Kaner was seated alone in his vehicle, filling out a missing person report.

As Mr. Sharp approached the car, he said "Hi, officer." As the officer looked up, Mr. Sharp fired the sawed-off shotgun directly through the open driver's window of the vehicle, into the face of Officer Kaner. Mr. Redwine, who approached the car from the passenger side, fired the revolver through the passenger window, striking the officer in the left inner wrist. Mr. Cavin opened the driver's door of the squad car and took Officer Kaner's .38 caliber Colt revolver.

All three men fled back to Mr. Redwine's car. Mr. Sharp and Mr. Cavin joined Mr. Amos in the rear seat. Mr. Redwine and Mr. Green were seated in front, with Mr. Green driving. The vehicle was then stopped by two police officers for having no license plates. During the stop, the officers observed the butt of the sawed-off shotgun and placed all occupants of the car under arrest.

Mr. Sharp and Mr. Cavin gave written statements admitting their role in this offense. Subsequently, Mr. Sharp pleaded guilty, and Mr. Cavin received a bench trial. After a bench trial, Mr. Redwine and Mr. Green were found guilty; Mr. Amos, who testified that he was asleep in the back seat of the vehicle, was acquitted.



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### MR. SHARP'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSES

During the interview with Mr. Sharp, he spoke of the racial turbulence and civil unrest of the early 1970s after the murder of Fred Hampton, leader of the Black Panther Party. Mr. Sharp stated that he was influenced by the social movements surrounding the Vietnam War and the Black Revolutions that were taking place on college campuses around the country, as well as the emerging drug culture. Mr. Sharp admits that he viewed all authority negatively and perceived that the police were the immediate enemy. As a result, when Mr. Sharp, along with his co-defendants, saw a police officer sitting in his car alone, it was their intent to "do their part for the Black Revolution" and embarrass the department by taking the officer's firearm. What resulted was the tragic murder of Officer Kenneth Kaner. Mr. Sharp approached the officer's vehicle with a sawed-off shotgun and spoke to Officer Kaner; it was then that the officer raised his weapon, at which point Mr. Sharp fired the shotgun, killing Officer Kaner.

### CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Sharp's criminal history includes prior convictions from November 26, 1964, for Larceny and March 12, 1965, for Theft of Services.

### INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Sharp has been incarcerated for forty-nine years and his institutional adjustment has been positive. He has never received a major ticket and has had only 6 minor tickets in 37 years. While serving his sentence, Mr. Sharp has diligently and successfully worked several jobs that require high degrees of trust, competence, and responsibility, including: porter in clinical services, lieutenant clerk for the East Cluster Zone, a member of the security labor pool, and being responsible for the games and activities in the Honor Unit. Additionally, Mr. Sharp has created a prison-transition program for first-time offenders over the age of 50, raised hepatitis C awareness by educating others about disease protection and health care in prison, volunteered as a drug counselor and health care instructor, participated in an HIV and STD awareness campaign to prevent the spread of diseases within prison, taught GED classes prior to the prison use of outside educators, and worked as a literacy tutor and a facilitator of anti-violence programs and workshops.

Observationally, in his interview, Mr. Sharp presented as a quiet, personable individual, who is respectful and interacts well with both peers and staff. Mr. Sharp has an excellent work history and outstanding disciplinary record.

### PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Sharp's has loving and supportive family and friends that will help ensure that he will continue to be a positive force in his community, if released. If parole is granted, Mr. Sharp would plan to reside with his brother, retired Chicago Police Sergeant Tyrone Sharp, at his home in Florida. An interstate compact has been approved for this plan.



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OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

The Board has received consistent and voluminous opposition to release prior to every hearing at which Mr. Sharp has been considered for parole. The Cook County State's Attorney's Office has also consistently objected to the release of Mr. Sharp on parole.

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Chairman Findley noted that he heard protests against release on December 4, 2019; Officer Kaner's journal was read, with the last entry date of June 19, 1970.

Ms. Crigler noted that she interviewed Mr. Sharp in 2012. At that interview, Mr. Sharp took complete accountability and expressed remorse. Ms. Crigler stated that in eight years on the Board, she had not seen another case with such a low number of tickets in forty-plus years of incarceration. She also stated that things are not as they were in 1970, noting that the change to two-man squad cars being standard practice came about as a result of this shooting.

Mr. Brink asked about the discharge date. Mr. Sharp was noted as having a six-month parole obligation after April 2021.

Chairman Findley asked about the number of votes at Mr. Sharp's last hearing. Ms. Daniels noted that the vote was 12-1, with Ms. Crigler being the only vote in favor of granting parole release to Mr. Sharp.

Mr. Brink asked whether the public would be better served with Mr. Sharp being on parole or instead "maxing out."

Ms. Daniels felt that the question to be considered was whether or not Mr. Sharp is a threat to society. She indicated that she does not feel that he is a threat.

Mr. Ruggiero stated that the decision should be based on the law that creates and runs the Board. Of the three requirements of the law, he feels that granting parole for this offense would promote disrespect for the law and deprecate the seriousness of the offense.

Ms. Crigler agreed with Mr. Ruggiero, but also noted that Mr. Sharp will be released soon and has demonstrated an amazing institutional adjustment.

Ms. Daniels spoke to the sentencing judges' mindset, observing that the sentence was to be a minimum of 30 years.



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Chairman Findley noted that it's clear Mr. Sharp will be paroled at some point and that those who protest his parole want to see him remain incarcerated for his parole time.

Cook County Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Alexander spoke to the Board in opposition to granting parole. ASA Alexander noted that Officer Kaner was in uniform, sitting in a marked police car at the time of the shooting. ASA Alexander highlighted that Mr. Sharp had a degree in social work and should have been a leader among his people, as stated by the judge at his trial. Instead, he committed a crime against the police and people of Illinois.

Officer Kaner's son requested that parole be denied. He told the Board that the question of whether parole would be granted at the hearing or continued to the maximum sentence date matters to the family of Officer Kaner. On behalf of the family, he expressed that early release speaks to disrespect for the law in their opinion. Officer Kaner's son also expressed his disappointment that a co-defendant of Mr. Sharp in the original offense was also in attendance at the hearing.

Mr. Sharp's brother spoke on Mr. Sharp's behalf, recounting the events as he remembered them.

Mr. Sharp's attorney also spoke on his behalf. He stated that Mr. Sharp has always taken responsibility for his actions and asked the Board to consider his parole petition.

Mr. Shelton felt there had never been an easier decision for the Board. Mr. Shelton stated that it was not reasonable for Mr. Sharp to expect that the officer would let Mr. Sharp take the officer's weapon.

Mr. Brink thought the hard issue was whether or not the Board wanted supervision on parole or to keep Mr. Sharp incarcerated until his mandatory parole period.

Mr. Shelton asked what success meant for a 70-year-old returning to the community and argued that simply being able to eat and have a place to live would qualify. Mr. Shelton noted those are a "given" for Mr. Sharp, as long as his brother is living.

Ms. Crigler felt that Mr. Sharp would need other help to navigate the world. She spoke to the fact that he gave a disposition that helped his victim's widow to receive full benefits. Ms. Crigler also noted that his offense was a federal offense because he had a sawed-off shotgun.

ASA Alexander did not have any information about the deposition mentioned by Ms. Crigler. Mr. Sharp's attorney said that in the disposition Mr. Sharp stated that the officer did reach for his weapon during the attack. Officer Kaner's son noted that the shotgun used in the attack was stolen from the federal government during a box car robbery.



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Ms. Martinez also spoke to the difficulty of the decision. She questioned whether it mattered if Mr. Sharp testified as to the officer's reaching for his weapon or not. Ms. Martinez noted that Mr. Sharp has an incredible institutional adjustment, but that she cannot figure out why he would shoot a police officer.

**DECISION AND RATIONALE**

Motion to grant parole (LD—EC). Motion fails by a vote of 6–7. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Brink, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Harris, and Ms. Wilson. Mr. Fisher, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, and Chairman Findley dissented.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Sharp'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 parole release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of the offense and promote a lack of respect for the law.

Motion to continue case to the maximum holding date (LD—DS). Motion prevails by a vote of 13–0.

*“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—December 12, 2019**

Inmate Name: **RONNIE CARRASQUILLO**

IDOC Number: **C80186**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at Room 212, State Capitol Building, 301 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois, on December 12, 2019, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Ronnie Carrasquillo C80186.

Members present were Mr. Brink, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Fisher, Ms. Harris, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Janet Crane.

**PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE**

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

The following is pursuant to the official Statement of Facts as provided by the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney:

On October 10, 1976, Officer Terrence Loftus of the Chicago Police Department was shot and killed when Ronnie Carrasquillo C80186 fired a gun four times in the direction of Officer Loftus's location, where Officer Loftus was attempting to help an individual who had been chased by a group of men. One of the shots hit Officer Loftus in the head; the bullet entered the left side of his face and exited at the right side of the back of his head, thereby killing him.

On October 10, 1976, at approximately 1:45 a.m., Officer Loftus, who was 36 years old, ended his shift in the 14<sup>th</sup> District. As Officer Loftus was driving away from the police station, he noticed a group of men chasing another man near the intersection of Fullerton and Central Park Avenue. Officer Loftus stopped his car and got out in order to help the man who was being chased.

This man, Edward Roman, was a member of a street gang called the "Imperial Spanish Gangsters." That night, the Imperial Spanish Gangsters were having a party in an apartment at 3561 W. Fullerton, near the intersection of Fullerton and Central Park. There were about 40–50 people at the party, including Mr. Carrasquillo, then 18 years old. Mr. Carrasquillo was a member of the Imperial Spanish Gangsters, reportedly known by the nickname "Mad Dog." Mr. Carrasquillo had come to the party armed with a .22 caliber gun. Another gang member, David Gonzalez, had come to the party armed with a .32 caliber semi-automatic pistol, loaded with seven rounds. That gun was painted pink and black, the colors of the Imperial Spanish Gangsters.





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Shortly before 2 a.m., Mr. Roman left the party and went to a bar at Fullerton and Lawndale, just west of Central Park. There was another gang in that area: the “Gaylords.” In fact, the intersection of Fullerton and Central Park was the border between the turfs of the Gaylords and the Imperial Spanish Gangsters; Mr. Roman, an Imperial Spanish Gangster, was in Gaylord territory. As Mr. Roman left the bar, a group of Gaylords began to chase him. He ran east toward Fullerton and Central Park. Officer Loftus was driving an unmarked car and was in plain clothes, when he saw Mr. Roman being chased. Officer Loftus, who was driving westbound, turned around and drove eastbound on Fullerton. He stopped his car in the westbound left-hand-turn lane. Officer Loftus then got out of his car and identified himself as a police officer. Gaylords ran up and told Officer Loftus that Mr. Roman had a gun. Officer Loftus stayed by Mr. Roman and held him by his wrist.

While this was happening on the street, somebody back at the party yelled that the Gaylords and the Imperial Spanish Gangsters were fighting in the street. The party was taking place in a second-floor apartment on the south side of Fullerton. A lot of people at the party began to run outside; Mr. Carrasquillo went to go find his gun. After he did, he and Mr. Gonzalez, who also had his gun, headed outside. As Mr. Gonzalez was leaving the apartment, Mr. Carrasquillo said to him, “Let me have the gun, I know what to do.” Mr. Gonzalez gave Mr. Carrasquillo the .32 caliber semi-automatic pistol. Mr. Carrasquillo then went downstairs with the two guns.

By the time Mr. Carrasquillo got outside, there was a police squad car on the scene. Officer Louis Bergmann was one of the officers in the squad car. Officer Bergman saw a gang fight going on east of Central Park on Fullerton. His partner, Officer Richard Kilroy, drove to the rear of Officer Loftus’ car, while Officer Bergmann jumped out and radioed for assistance, indicating there was a gang fight. The emergency lights of the squad car were on. Officer Bergmann and his partner were both in full uniform. Officer Bergman saw two people fighting, so he grabbed and separated them. When Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Carrasquillo got outside, Mr. Gonzalez noticed flashing blue lights from police cars. As Officer Bergmann approached the larger group of people near Officer Loftus, he heard some shout, “Gangster love” from southeast of him and then immediately heard four or five gunshots.

Mr. Carrasquillo had gone up to one of the cars parked near 3563 W. Fullerton. He saw a figure whom he thought was Nelson Crespo, one of his fellow gang members, being held by another man and also saw his friends fighting with Gaylords. Mr. Carrasquillo then leaned over the car’s windshield and held the .32 caliber pistol with both hands. His arms were straight in front of him and his eyes were about at the level of the sight of the gun. He pointed the gun toward the crowd by the intersection of Fullerton and Central Park. He then fired the gun four times in rapid succession. One of the shots hit Officer Loftus in the head; the bullet entered the left side of his face at about eye level and exited out the back of his head. At the time Officer Loftus was shot, he was holding Mr. Roman. Officer Loftus did not have anything in his hands and had not drawn a weapon. When Officer Bergmann came up to Officer Loftus and found him



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collapsed on the street, Officer Bergmann noticed that Officer Loftus' two guns were still holstered.

Officer Loftus was taken to St. Elizabeth Hospital and was placed in the intensive care unit. He died two days later.

Mr. Carrasquillo was subsequently arrested, tried, and convicted of the Murder of Officer Loftus. Mr. Carrasquillo appealed both his conviction and sentence; his appeal was denied by the Illinois Appellate Court. In 1988, he filed a post-conviction petition that was dismissed. In 1991 he petitioned for executive clemency, which was also denied.

MR. CARRASQUILLO'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSES

Mr. Carrasquillo has given numerous statements regarding the events, some of which dispute the assertions of the Statement of Facts as laid out above. In particular, while Mr. Carrasquillo has admitted his guilt and involvement in the Murder of Officer Loftus, with no dispute that Mr. Carrasquillo shot the gun that killed Officer Loftus, Mr. Carrasquillo has repeatedly claimed that he did not intend to kill Officer Loftus. Mr. Carrasquillo has also previously noted concerns regarding his questioning and detainment.

Mr. Carrasquillo has expressed remorse from the time of the Murder. Former Assistant State's Attorney Thomas Breen has stated that "From the very first day of becoming involved in the prosecution of the case, I noticed something very different about Ronnie Carrasquillo. He was saddened, remorseful, and ashamed.... even back in 1976 he appeared to be one of those who deeply felt that what he had done was so senseless." (Mr. Breen's letter was provided to the Board in previous parole applications.)

Mr. Carrasquillo also provided the following description of the facts and circumstances of the Murder:

On October 9, 1976, Mr. Carrasquillo spent the evening partying with a group of his friends. At around 2:00 in the morning, when the party was winding down, Mr. Carrasquillo heard that a gang fight had begun nearby. He went outside and saw that a fight had broken out between members of his gang, the Imperial Spanish Gangsters, and the mostly white Gaylords, a rival gang. The brawl was taking place at West Fullerton and Central Park Avenues—the intersection of the two gangs' turfs.

Mr. Carrasquillo had lost several friends to local gang violence and decided to take it upon himself to break up the fight. He took a gun offered to him by fellow partygoer Mr. Gonzalez. Then, despite being drunk and having his vision obscured by the night's darkness, Mr. Carrasquillo attempted to shoot over the crowd, firing the gun four times while aiming for the top of the YMCA building across the intersection. Unbeknownst to Mr. Carrasquillo, Officer



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Loftus, off duty and in plain clothes, was in the crowd and was protecting Mr. Roman. Tragically, one of the bullets killed Officer Loftus.

Mr. Carrasquillo also has said that he did not intentionally murder Officer Loftus. Mr. Carrasquillo has noted that Officer Loftus was dressed in plain clothes at 2 a.m., standing in the middle of a crowd of dozens of youths who were fighting youths from the gang that Mr. Carrasquillo belonged to and others from an opposing gang. Mr. Carrasquillo fired four shots, reportedly aiming for the top of a tall building across the intersection from where he was standing, so he would scare the group into halting their fight. At the moment Mr. Carrasquillo fired, Officer Loftus was in the middle of the fight protecting a friend of Mr. Carrasquillo, Mr. Roman, so that the friend would not be hurt. Mr. Carrasquillo indicated that he had no reason to kill Officer Loftus, even if he had known he was there. Moreover, Mr. Carrasquillo indicated that the witnesses who testified about the event on the State's behalf were either teenagers, who had been held in a police station for hours where they were verbally and physically abused before they provided statements to the prosecution, or police officers who arrived at the scene as events unfolded and who did not even recognize their colleague Officer Loftus in his off-duty attire.

### CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Carrasquillo's prior criminal history includes a July 1976 arrest for battery and theft, with charges that were later stricken off with leave to reinstate.

### INSTUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Carrasquillo was born in Chicago, Illinois on May 4, 1958. He is the third youngest of four children. When he was four years old, his parents divorced; his father remarried and had three children. Mr. Carrasquillo and his siblings lived with their mother, who supported the family on \$25 a week. Mr. Carrasquillo also reportedly excelled at baseball and football.

When Mr. Carrasquillo was 15 and a sophomore at Orr High School, his mother suddenly died. His sister, then 20, got her own apartment, and his brother left for college. Mr. Carrasquillo's father and his new wife now had two daughters and a son. They reportedly did not want Mr. Carrasquillo or his 13- year-old brother living with them, so their father quickly arranged for them to live in the second floor of an apartment behind his house, while he rented out the first floor.

After Mr. Carrasquillo moved from his mother's house, he continued to go to Orr High School; however, the school was nearly five miles away. Mr. Carrasquillo's father worked 60–80 hours a week as a chef, and so, partly to be connected to his only living parent, Mr. Carrasquillo joined him at work on the weekends, holding numerous entry-level jobs in food service, including at the Lake Shore Club, the Stock Yard Inn, and Arlington Race track.

Mr. Carrasquillo's new home was in a gang neighborhood, with Latino Gangs on the one side; white gangs on the other. Soon thereafter, Mr. Carrasquillo gravitated to the gang life,



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joining the Imperial Spanish Gangsters, a Puerto Rican gang. That decision ultimately led to the events of this case.

One constant throughout his parole hearings is the observation that Mr. Carrasquillo's Institutional Adjustment has been excellent.

Mr. Carrasquillo has served as a library paralegal and has learned how to repair and install heating units, washers, and dryers. He has also served as a teacher's aide in courses on sheet metal and heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration.

Mr. Carrasquillo started taking his first educational classes in August of 1979 and has continued since then, earning his GED and college credits. He continues to focus on his learning and spiritual growth as he pursues certificate and achievement programs as they become available.

Mr. Carrasquillo has had a total of nine Inmate Disciplinary Reports, with one in the last 20 years and two in the last 24 years. His last ticket was on May 2, 2014. The write-up for that violation is as follows: "Based on evidence in the ticket that the inmate was found to have a broken correspondence box lid, the inmate's admission of guilt, and reporting staff's positive identification of the inmate, the committee finds the inmate guilty and charges him restitution for the box."

### PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Carrasquillo's first option, in the event that he is paroled, is to live with his brother and sister-in-law in Greenwood, Indiana. Mr. Carrasquillo has been approved to parole out of state to that location. Mr. Carrasquillo's basic needs would be met by his family as he adjusts and gets on his feet. Upon release he will have employment, food, shelter, and support from his brother and sister-in-law.

At 61 years of age, Mr. Carrasquillo has had to cope with some serious medical problems. He was diagnosed with coronary artery disease and received surgery for his condition on two occasions in 2012. He is on four heart-related medications that he will need to take for the rest of his life.

Mr. Carrasquillo's brother and sister-in-law run their own insurance business in Indianapolis, Indiana, and they would employ Mr. Carrasquillo at their business, and also house him in their home. They are also active with their community church, Mount Pleasant Christian Church, which Ronnie would join if he were granted parole.

Mr. Carrasquillo has a second employment opportunity in Indianapolis, which is about a half an hour from Greenwood. His niece's husband owns and operates a company that cleans commercial buildings and restores furniture, where Mr. Carrasquillo has a standing job offer.



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OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

Numerous protest letters have been filed each and every time Mr. Carrasquillo has been considered for parole. The Cook County State's Attorney's Office has also consistently objected to the release of Mr. Carrasquillo on parole.

DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Ms. Martinez discussed the opposition to parole. A petition with nearly 2000 signatures was submitted against parole. Ms. Martinez noted that Mr. Carrasquillo has been reputed to be leader of the gang while in prison, and that his leadership position has contributed to his lack of disciplinary tickets, because the members do what he wants done, so that he remains blameless. Ms. Martinez noted that Mr. Carrasquillo earned gang respect when he killed a police officer.

The Board noted that no cases involving gang issues were found in the Greenwood, Indiana area where Mr. Carrasquillo requests to be paroled.

Board members discussed the logistics of the shooting. Officer Loftis was approximately 150 feet from Ronnie Carrasquillo; shooting with a 32 caliber at that distance is not a high probability of hitting the target. Ms. Martinez said Mr. Carrasquillo knew his other gang members were there, and asked why would he shoot and risk hitting them? Ms. Crigler stated that he was just wanting to break up the fight.

Mr. Carrasquillo was not sent to Tamms when it was open. Mr. Shelton noted that the gang leaders sent there were the ones who were causing problems.

Cook County Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Alexander opposed parole on behalf of the People. He cited the seriousness of the offense and the risk of not conforming to the conditions of parole. ASA Alexander also pointed to Mr. Carrasquillo's known gang involvement and his reputation built on a police officer killing. ASA Alexander spoke further regarding the different versions of the events, noting that there were bullets found on the lower level of the building.

Commander Roman spoke to the Board in opposition to parole release and respecting the difficulty of their decisions. He made the point that as police officers, he and his colleagues are charged to protect the public.

Mr. Shelton said that there was suggestion of gang activities in 2016–2017 during interviews with known gang members. Ms. Crigler offered that these gang members who were interviewed and shared information with IDOC could have done so in order to receive favors. ASA Alexander reported that he could not say for certain whether they did or did not receive



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anything for their information, but information could be confidential in order to protect the informant's identity.

Ms. Harris asked about the need to conduct the interviews, inquiring whether there a disturbance that led to an investigation, but was informed that no reason for the interviews was listed in the file. Ms. Harris also asked if Mr. Carrasquillo had received any tickets for gang activities. Mr. James reported that Mr. Carrasquillo received a ticket in 1994 for a picture in his cell in which a person was displaying a gang sign.

Mr. Carrasquillo's sister-in-law spoke on his behalf. She started by thanking the attorneys and the Board for all their work on this case. She said that since marrying into the family 19 years ago, she has gotten to know Mr. Carrasquillo very well. She described him as having a spirit of grace, a lifelong learner, and a caring and compassionate man. She credits him with pulling the family together, noting his having written hundreds of letters to family members offering encouragement. She assured the Board that she and her husband "run a tight ship" and that there would not be gang activity tolerated at their business, which is a part of the proposed parole plan. In closing, she told the Board that "today is the right time for parole" and asked for careful and prayerful consideration.

Attorney Jean Snyder addressed the Board on Mr. Carrasquillo's behalf. She spoke about the gang member was purported to be Mr. Carrasquillo's nephew. He is not a relative. Other claims of gang involvement are hard to dispute if the facts are not known. She said that yes, Mr. Carrasquillo was a gang member, but that he got out of the gang in the 1990s. Mr. Carrasquillo's sister-in-law said that they have the documentation where he officially denounced the gang. Ms. Snyder went on to say that the officer's death was tragic and noted that he was not initially known to be a police officer because he was off duty and in his personal vehicle. Ms. Snyder said that Mr. Carrasquillo was drunk and tried to stop the fight with disastrous results. She also recognized the temptation to retry the case. She stated that the goal going forward is to reform in prison and to show others that there is hope for parole. Mr. Carrasquillo's educational accomplishments are listed in the parole petition provided to Board Members. Ms. Snyder also particularly noted foreword written by Mr. Carrasquillo in the book "Foundations for Life."

Commander Roman had an additional comment to the Board. He asked that they consider whether, even if Mr. Carrasquillo didn't mean to shoot the officer, it was acceptable to shoot into a crowd to break up a fight.

Mr. Brink felt the issue was whether or not Mr. Carrasquillo was a threat to society. He stated that this type of parole is very difficult to grant. He stated that he does not know whether he can ever support parole for crimes involving the death of an officer.

Mr. Fisher said that even though Mr. Carrasquillo has great institutional adjustment and the support of his family, the bottom line is that he shot and killed a police officer.



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**DECISION AND RATIONALE**

Motion to grant parole (OJ—DWD). Motion fails by a vote of 7–6. Parole is therefore denied as a matter of State law, due to the failure to receive votes in favor of parole release from a majority of the appointed Board Members. Members voting in favor of the motion were Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Harris, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, and Ms. Wilson. Mr. Brink, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, and Chairman Findley dissented.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Carrasquillo’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 parole release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of the offense 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—December 12, 2019**

Inmate Name: **LARRY KURENA**

IDOC Number: **C82540**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at Room 212, State Capitol Building, 301 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois, on December 12, 2019, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Larry Kurena C82540.

Members present were Mr. Brink, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Fisher, Ms. Harris, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Janet Crane.

**PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE**

Larry Kurena C82540 was interviewed for parole consideration in the presence of counsel on November 14, 2019, at the Danville Correctional Center. Mr. Kurena is currently serving a 200–500-year sentence for the stabbing Murders of two men in 1976.

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

On March 13, 1976, victims John Taylor and Emil Lauridsen, while inside a Chicago area tavern, were called upon to help remove an intoxicated, unruly young man at the request of the young man's father. As they were assisting the young man home, they were approached by Mr. Kurena, Mr. Kurena's brother, and other men who objected to the intervention of Mr. Taylor and Mr. Lauridsen. Mr. Kurena is known to have consumed alcohol and "pills" on the day of the murders.

Mr. Kurena, having been in an earlier unrelated altercation with a different person at a different location, had armed himself with a kitchen knife; and was now spoiling for a fight. The disturbance ended, with no arrests being made, following the arrival of police. Having completed their aforementioned task, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Lauridsen were on their way back to the tavern, when they were confronted by Mr. Kurena and his group.

Mr. Kurena stabbed Mr. Lauridsen, killing him; Mr. Kurena then stabbed Mr. Taylor, killing him as well. Mr. Kurena was later arrested and convicted of the Murders. Trial testimony from Mr. Kurena's associates of that day clearly established his understanding of what he had





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done; specifically, that he had stabbed his friend Mr. Taylor, and that Mr. Kurena had “left the knife in” the other man. The Appellate Court affirmed the conviction in 1980.

MR. KURENA’S STATEMENTS REGARDING THE OFFENSES

Mr. Kurena is also reported to have said that he did not know why he committed the offenses. Notably, Mr. Kurena is known to have consumed alcohol and “pills” on the day of the Murders.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Mr. Kurena was paroled in March of 1993 after serving 17 years of his original sentence. He was married for a number of years but eventually began to have troubles, apparently related to substance abuse. Following an arrest for D.U.I. and the collapse of his marriage, Mr. Kurena became the Respondent of an Order of Protection granted to his wife and son. He and his wife subsequently divorced in 2003. Mr. Kurena also reportedly completed a substance abuse program in Illinois.

In March of 2004, Mr. Kurena was arrested for violating his ex-wife’s Order of Protection. Mr. Kurena pled guilty, with a sentence of 6 days, credit time served. He relocated to Indiana on the advice of his parole officer. Following a later arrest in Indiana for Theft, regarding which Mr. Kurena pled guilty, as well as the making of an allegedly threatening statement to his ex-wife by telephone, Mr. Kurena was returned to Illinois custody as a parole violator. A witness in the Indiana Theft case additionally commented that he recognized Mr. Kurena as someone he would see parked at a graveyard, sitting on his car drinking beer. Upon consideration of that violation case, the Board revoked Mr. Kurena’s parole. Additional complaints from his ex-wife to the Department of Corrections in 2011 for violations of continuing No Contact Orders have resulted in additional corrective measures taken by IDOC.

INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

As noted above, Mr. Kurena was paroled in 1993, before later being returned to custody as a result of parole violations.

As reported in prior deliberations regarding subsequent release to parole, Mr. Kurena attempted in 2015 to argue his innocence in the Indiana Theft case to which he pled guilty while on parole. In support of that claim, Mr. Kurena submitted an affidavit purported to have been



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executed by an exculpatory witness. The statement of the affidavit was subsequently determined to be a fabrication. Mr. Kurena acknowledged the following year that the affidavit was a fraud.

### PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Kurena has indicated that he would have significant support from both family and friends, including offers of housing with both friends and Mr. Kurena's brother. Mr. Kurena has also reported that he would have employment available if granted release.

### OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE

There continues to be a strong showing of objection to parole release by multiple family members of both victims' families, as well as by the Cook County State's Attorney.

### DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Introductions were made of supporters and those in opposition to parole.

Mr. Kurena's supporters reported that Mr. Kurena's response to the issue of his having violated the Order of Protection was that he wanted a relationship with his son, which resulted from a change in custody status that was initiated by his ex-wife. The violation in 2011 was reportedly because he had been sending letters to others asking them to mail them to his ex-wife.

Joe Kurena spoke on behalf of his brother. He pointed out that the crime was 43 years ago, that Mr. Kurena has been a model prisoner, that he has a place to stay, and that he has a job awaiting him on release. Mr. Kurena's brother also noted that Mr. Kurena has attended and is attending anger management and alcohol treatment programs.

Mr. Kurena's attorney also spoke on his behalf. She indicated that the Order of Protection was issued during the course of Mr. Kurena's divorce, but that there were no issues during the 10-year marriage that indicated a need for an Order of Protection. After the divorce, Mr. Kurena returned to his previous alcohol abuse. He has since taken steps to better himself and realize the part alcohol played in his life. Mr. Kurena is heartbroken that his son does not want a relationship with him, but he does understand. Mr. Kurena's attorney noted that Refusing Housing is his only ticket in 14 years.

Mr. Tupy reported that he had spoken to Mr. Kurena's counsel about his alcohol treatment attendance; Mr. Tupy asked about Mr. Kurena's attendance in 2019. Mr. Kurena's



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attorney has been able to provide documentation that Mr. Kurena has attended meetings weekly since February 22, 2019.

Ms. Martinez asked about the letters sent indirectly to ex-wife and son in 2011. Mr. Shelton said he read the report in 2011 but that those investigatory files are not in Mr. Kurena's master file, noting that sometimes sanctions are not in the form of tickets.

Chairman Findley asked what confidence the Board should have that Mr. Kurena would comply with release conditions, if parole is granted. The Chairman noted that Mr. Kurena must understand the grave consequences of his drinking.

Mr. Kurena's victims' family members spoke to the Board, noting that they feel that he minimizes the crime, even though he claims to be remorseful. The family spokesperson passionately addressed the need to deny parole and impose a lengthier set before a subsequent hearing.

Cook County Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Alexander spoke on behalf of the State. ASA Alexander noted that the State opposes parole based on the extremely serious nature of the offenses. ASA Alexander argued that although Mr. Kurena's alcohol abuse provides context, it doesn't excuse the actions he took.

Mr. Fisher spoke to Mr. Kurena's choice of wording on his description of his crime. Mr. Kurena said he "poked" his victim with the knife; Mr. Fisher noted that the victims had massive injuries and were nearly cut in half. Mr. Fisher stated that he also feels that Mr. Kurena minimizes his crime.

### **DECISION AND RATIONALE**

Motion to deny parole (DS—JR). Motion prevails by a vote of 6–7. Parole is denied as a matter of State law, due to the failure to receive votes in favor of parole release from a majority of the appointed Board Members. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Fisher, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, and Ms. Wilson. Mr. Brink, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Harris, Mr. James, and Chairman Findley dissented.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Kurena'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. Kurena 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.

Motion for a two-year set (DS—JR). Motion fails by a vote of 4–9. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Brink, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Ruggiero, and Mr. Shelton. Ms. Crigler, Ms.



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Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Harris, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Tupy, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley dissented.

*“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—December 12, 2019**

Inmate Name: **MICHAEL HENDERSON**

IDOC Number: **C81919**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at Room 212, State Capitol Building, 301 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois, on December 12, 2019, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Michael Henderson C81919.

Members present were Mr. Brink, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Fisher, Ms. Harris, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Janet Crane.

**PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE**

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

Per the recitation of the facts of the case provided in *People v. Henderson* by the First District Appellate Court of the State of Illinois in 1980:

‘The record indicates that on September 15, 1976, the body of Zelda Wilson, the 87-year-old victim, was founding lying nude from the waist down on the floor of her apartment. A pathologist testified that her cause of death was due to asphyxiation and blunt trauma to the head. After investigating the scene, the police arrested the then 18-year-old defendant and took him to the station for questioning. After being advised of his rights, Mr. Henderson confessed to the murder and rape of the victim. According to his signed statement, which was admitted into evidence and read at trial, Mr. Henderson provided the following statement:

“He returned to his apartment at about 11:00 a.m. that day and saw the victim in the back of the apartment building emptying garbage. He asked her for a glass of water, and she invited him in. He did so, drank some, and put the glass on the sink. He then said he did not want any water, picked up a knife, told her he “wanted some pussy” (sex) and to go into the bedroom. She consented and asked him not to kill her. He then knocked her down, picked up a knife, and stabbed her four or five times. He said the knife he used was different from the one he originally picked up because the victim hid the other one. He left the knife he stabbed her with on the floor near her. He then went into the bathroom and washed his hands,



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leaving blood on the bathroom sink. He left the victim's apartment, took a shower, and changed his clothes. He said he threw his dirty clothes into his sister's laundry bag and she washed them. He said he cut his middle and ring fingers of his right hand when he stabbed the victim. When he left the victim's apartment, he had blood on his hand, so he wiped it on the wall. He stated that he saw the man who lived in a third-floor apartment, told him he saw a man running out of the victim's apartment, and asked him to see if the victim was okay. This man got another neighbor and after knocking on the victim's door, the defendant opened the door with his shirttail. He said they saw the victim lying on the floor, nude."

Following his conviction, Michael Henderson C81919 appealed the judgment, contending that: (1) because of his limited intelligence and the absence of family and legal counsel, he did not intelligently and voluntarily waive his right to remain silent; (2) the trial court erred in admitting his inculpatory statements because they were a product of an unlawful arrest; (3) the state failed to prove that he was fit to stand trial; (4) the trial court erred in admitting evidence of his blood type; (5) he was not proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt; and (6) his sentence was excessive. This appeal was denied and the conviction and sentence were affirmed.

#### MR. HENDERSON'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSE

At the time of his interview for parole consideration, Mr. Henderson had severe tremors, similar to a person with Parkinson's Disease. When asked if he had a health condition that caused the tremors, he said he was nervous, which caused him to shake in a manner that appeared to be outside of his control. Mr. Henderson's responses to the interviewing Board Member's questions were largely incoherent. Mr. Henderson said that he no recollection of the crime. Notably, this was markedly different from his reaction when asked about the crime at his last interview, at which he was noted to have lowered his eyes and seemed to withdraw. In this instance, Mr. Henderson did not withdraw; instead, he seemed to be disconnected from both the crime and his incarceration. Mr. Henderson did state that he wanted to be transferred to another prison but could not explain the reason for that request.

#### CRIMINAL HISTORY

Over the course of his life, Mr. Henderson has been arrested for the following:

1. Unlawful Use of a Weapon in March of 1976; the case was dismissed on May 5, 1976.
2. Theft and Criminal Damage to Property, for which a bond forfeiture warrant was issued on August 24, 1977; the case was dismissed on February 1, 1979.



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3. While incarcerated in the Illinois Department of Corrections, Mr. Henderson was charged in 1987 with Criminal Sexual Assault in Montgomery County, where he pled guilty and was sentenced to 4 years.

### INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Henderson's institutional adjustment has been limited, in large part due to significant mental processing issues. In particular, Mr. Henderson he was diagnosed by a psychiatrist during the appellate process in 1980 as having severe mental deficiencies. This opinion was corroborated by a Chicago Board of Education report which indicated that Mr. Henderson consistently demonstrated IQ scores well below those appropriate for his age cohort throughout his youth. The psychiatrist further stated in 1977 (when Mr. Henderson was 19 years old) that in his opinion Mr. Henderson had the mental age of a 12 to 14-year-old. That same report further indicated that this caused him to have difficulty understanding concepts, numbers, and symbols, and that while he had difficulty reading and understanding language, he was capable of conversing on a simple level.

When asked what he does to occupy his time, Mr. Henderson said he played checkers and sleeps.

Mr. Henderson stated that before incarceration, he lived with his mother, had five siblings and was employed, but he did not recall where he worked or what type of work he performed.

Mr. Henderson did not recall where he was raised. When asked his age, he indicated that he was 35, and that he was born on July 10, 1958. Mr. Henderson is 61.

Records indicate that Mr. Henderson is divorced and has two children. When asked the ages of his children, he answered 4 and 5 years old.

When asked where he would live if paroled, he answered 'with my mother' but did not recall where she lives or even if she was still alive. He is not in touch with any family members.

### PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Henderson has no parole plan prepared. When asked about this, his response was to request to be transferred to another prison. As noted above, when asked why he would request a transfer of facility he stated that he "didn't recall."

### EN BANC HISTORY

Since 1985, Mr. Henderson has been denied parole 22 times by the Board.



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**DISCUSSION**

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Chairman Findley stated that he has interviewed Mr. Henderson. The Chairman indicated that facility staff have asked the Board for help getting Mr. Henderson to a facility better suited to his needs.

Ms. Crigler said she doesn't think Mr. Henderson would survive outside a facility.

Mr. Shelton asked about possible placement of Mr. Henderson at Elgin or the Joliet Treatment Center. Mr. Shelton asked if Mr. Henderson is a sexually violent person. Ms. Wilson indicated that Mr. Henderson isn't attacking people.

Ms. Crigler stated that she felt a transfer to a treatment center for diagnosis was a good option. Board Members asked if Joliet Treatment Center could be recommended. Chairman Findley said the Board can make a recommendation, but that the final decision on transfer and placement in facilities is the purview of the Department of Corrections.

Cook County Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Alexander spoke on behalf of the State in objection to parole. ASA Alexander indicated that Mr. Henderson should be reviewed to determine if he is a sexually violent person.

**DECISION AND RATIONALE**

Motion to deny parole (EW—DWD). Motion prevails by a vote of 13–0.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Henderson'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. Henderson would not conform to reasonable conditions of parole, and that parole release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of the offense 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—December 12, 2019**

Inmate Name: **ROBERT GORHAM**

IDOC Number: **C70122**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at Room 212, State Capitol Building, 301 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois, on December 12, 2019, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Robert Gorham C70122.

Members present were Mr. Brink, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Fisher, Ms. Harris, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, Ms. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

Recording Secretary: Janet Crane.

**PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE**

Robert Gorham C70122, age 68, was reviewed for parole consideration. That consideration included, but was not limited to: an examination of the facts of the instant conviction and sentencing, a review of his criminal history, a review of his institutional adjustment as documented by the Department of Corrections, reference to previous Board notations, and an in-person interview conducted at Western Illinois Correctional Center.

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

Mr. Gorham conspired with his girlfriend Kathleen Thompson to commit the Murder of her husband, Kenneth Thompson, so that Mr. Gorham and Mrs. Thompson could enjoy the proceeds of the victim's life insurance policy.

On January 10, 1975, Mr. Gorham killed Mr. Thompson by shooting him in the head. The shooting occurred inside the victim's van after Mrs. Thompson arranged to have Mr. Thompson give Mr. Gorham a ride; this ride was purportedly for the purpose of picking up some cash with which Gorham was to satisfy a small debt to Mrs. Thompson. Mrs. Thompson had told her husband that she bailed Mr. Gorham out of jail, and that he was going to repay her, but that story was simply a ruse to get the two men together alone so that Mr. Gorham could fulfill the plan to murder Mr. Thompson.

There were other people involved, peripherally, in the conspiracy: Mike Rose and his wife Mary were friends who were to provide an alibi for Mr. Gorham, by attesting falsely that he had been at their house all night on the night of the Murder. In addition, James Olendorf was a friend of Mr. Gorham's who provided the gun, accompanied Mr. Gorham when Mr. Gorham test-fired the gun, accompanied Mr. Gorham when Mr. Gorham retrieved the gun from under a



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garbage can where he'd hidden it after the Murder, and passed the gun on to another friend in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent it from being recovered by authorities.

Pieces (parts) of the gun were later recovered. Jack Welty, a firearms examiner with the Illinois Bureau of Identification (later merged into the Illinois State Police) was able to match the firing pin from the Murder weapon to spent shell casings recovered from the crime scene inside the victim's van.

Almost immediately after the discovery of Mr. Thompson's body, Mrs. Thompson and Mr. Gorham became the main suspects in the case but, despite strong suspicions, the police did not have enough information to make arrests. The break in the case came eight months later. In September of 1975, following the arrests of Mr. Gorham and an unrelated co-offender for burglarizing homes in Park Forest, police used newly discovered information to prompt the cooperation of Mrs. Thompson, resulting ultimately in a 42-page statement from Mr. Gorham. Mr. Gorham was unsuccessful in a later attempt to suppress that statement with a claim that it was not voluntarily made.

Mrs. Thompson was indicted for—and ultimately pled guilty to—a charge of Conspiracy to Commit Murder, for which she was sentenced to a term of 1–10 years of imprisonment. Mr. Gorham was convicted of Murder and sentenced to a term of 100–200 years of imprisonment.

At sentencing, Judge Machala made reference to the planning of the Murder taking place over a considerably long time and that the plan was executed coolly and deliberately. Judge Machala stated that he would have considered imposing a sentence of Death if the law at that time would have permitted it. Officials with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office have argued that Mr. Gorham would qualify for a Natural Life Without Parole sentence under current sentencing guidelines, on the basis that he committed the Murder under an agreement to receive payment.

In April and May of 1975, Mrs. Thompson received payments totaling \$66,000 from the insurance company. When Mrs. Thompson testified at Mr. Gorham's trial, she said she bought him a car, a motorcycle, and a boat.

### CRIMINAL HISTORY

Members of this Board continue to be concerned about the number and nature of Mr. Gorham's arrests, occurring both before and after he murdered Mr. Thompson. Although some arrests suggest possible substance use disorder, these arrests appear not to have given Mr. Gorham pause to change his criminal trajectory.

Board records from 2010 recorded that Mr. Gorham, "exclaimed that his prior criminal behavior resulted from a rejection of societal values." That statement was made during a hearing that occurred after Mr. Gorham was alleged to have sexually assaulted a cellmate, but,



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apparently, before the Board was aware of the incident, which occurred approximately 26 years into his incarceration.

Most notable of the aforementioned arrests was Mr. Gorham's fifth arrest, at the age of 20, for Attempt Murder, Aggravated Battery, and Unlawful Use of a Weapon. In that particular case, Mr. Gorham and a co-offender aimed to rob an individual at gunpoint. Ultimately, Mr. Gorham, who was armed with a shotgun, shot the 65-year-old mother of his intended victim after she told the assailants that her son was not there. She survived with permanent injuries. Mr. Gorham was convicted on reduced charges for a sentence of 2–4 years in prison.

Having committed the Murder for which he now serves, but having not yet been arrested for it, Mr. Gorham was arrested for other offenses an additional six times in Illinois, Louisiana, and Indiana. Those arrests included two weapons-related offenses. One of the non-weapons arrests, which was for Burglary in Park Forest, Illinois, resulted in a sentence of 5–15 years. It was during this Burglary investigation that information led to the cooperation of Mrs. Thompson in the Murder investigation.

#### INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Gorham's record of disciplinary issues is problematic, although it has practically come to a stop since his transfer from Hill Correctional Center to Menard Correctional Center in March of 2010. That transfer resulted from a Sexual Assault investigation, which concluded that he had sexually assaulted his cellmate on January 23, 2010. That allegation resulted in the collection of physical and biological evidence, including specimens from Mr. Gorham, that were sent to the State Crime Lab. That case also resulted in the filing of charges by the Knox County State's Attorney's Office. By the time the criminal case was docketed for trial, however, the victim, who had completed the service of his Mandatory Supervised Release and had been fully discharged from his sentence, failed to cooperate with prosecution of the offense.

The most recent documented discipline issue in Mr. Gorham's file was for Fighting. In that case, he was alleged to have fought with his cellmate (a different cellmate from the Sexual Assault case) while returning from chow in March of 2011. Mr. Gorham has additionally been sanctioned for Intimidation at the ages of 30, 34, 35, and 44; he has also been charged with violations relating to Drugs/Drug Paraphernalia at the ages of 41, 43 and 46, including being found with one and one-half gallons of homemade "hooch." There have been no additional drug-related incidents since he completed a Drug Education Program at Pinckneyville at age 48. Mr. Gorham has also been the subject of multiple sanctions for Trading and Trafficking, which included being caught passing packages of stored stolen food products. There have also been numerous instances of Disobeying Direct Orders and Unauthorized Movement throughout Mr. Gorham's 20s, 30s, and into his 40s.

Mr. Gorham has been described as a skilled barber, having been assigned Barber Shop duties as early as 1985 while at Menard, as well as at Dixon in 1998 and 1999. He has been



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described as reliable, dependable, and needing little supervision in that capacity. Mr. Gorham has previously been housed in the Honor Dorm at Hill Correctional Center at least as early as July 1986 and as late as January 1991, but there have been many discipline issues both before and since that time.

### PAROLE PLANS

Mr. Gorham submitted a 2019 letter of support/acceptance from St. Leonard's House in Chicago. He suffers from a chronic, but not debilitating, illness and appears capable of having gainful employment. Mr. Gorham also has hearing loss and is in need of a knee replacement.

### DISCUSSION

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

In response to questioning from Board Members, Mr. Shelton noted that the Sexual Assault which resulted in a disciplinary ticket while at Hill was reported by Mr. Gorham's cell mate. Mr. Shelton further noted that the case was docketed in Knox County, but was dropped because victim was paroled and did not want to return. Mr. Shelton observed that although Mr. Gorham has no mental health diagnosis, the term "psychopath" appears in notations regarding Mr. Gorham in documentation on file at Dixon.

Cook County Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Alexander indicated that the State stands on their submitted letter of protest.

### DECISION AND RATIONALE

Motion to deny parole (DS—PF). Motion prevails by a vote of 13–0.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Gorham'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. Peter would not conform to reasonable conditions of parole, that parole release could have an adverse effect upon institutional discipline, and that parole release at this time would deprecate the serious nature of the offense and promote a lack of respect for the law.

Motion for a three-year set (KT—DS). Motion prevails by a vote of 7–6. Members voting in favor of the set were Mr. Brink, Mr. Fisher, Ms. Harris, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, and Chairman Findley. Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. Dunn, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, and Ms. Wilson dissented.

*"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."*