

**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET**  
**OPEN SESSION—December 16, 2021**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on December 16, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for the following individuals in custody:

<b>C90056</b>	<b>Virgil Robinson</b>
<b>C02117</b>	<b>Oscar Curtis*</b>
<b>C81919</b>	<b>Michael Henderson</b>

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Findley.

Roll call was taken by Recording Secretary Andrea Hegland.

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

14 Members Present

The Board heard and voted upon the cases of Virgil Robinson, Oscar Curtis and Michael Henderson as detailed in the individual case minutes.

Meeting was adjourned (CF—LD). Leave.



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***EN BANC MINUTE SHEET***  
**OPEN SESSION—December 16, 2021**

Name: **VIRGIL ROBINSON \***

IDOC Number: **C90056**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on December 16, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Virgil Robinson\* C90056.

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

Recording Secretary: Andrea Hegland.

**PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE**

Virgil Robinson C90056 was interviewed live via WebEx virtual platform from Lawrence Correctional Center on November 1, 2021 at 9:40 a.m. Mr. Robinson's pro bono legal counsel was present and participating including Carolyn Klarquist and Peter Sgro. Mr. Robinson was put together and prepared for the interview. Mr. Robinson's demeanor could best be described as polite yet defensive. He communicated clearly and without issue. His attitude was perfectly fine, but as mentioned, does carry a defensive posture and attitude as it pertains to his innocence as well as what he describes as a history of defending himself. Mr. Robinson was in good health and no current health issues present. Mr. Robinson was able to represent himself in communication throughout the interview and was able to answer questions with minimal assistance. It should be noted that Mr. Robinson had not received the master file for review as requested, but when asked if he wished for a continuance in order to review the file, he stated that he wanted to continue with the interview anyways since he had just reviewed it less than a year ago at the last En Banc.

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

Mr. Robinson, at the age of 25, committed the act of armed robbery against a cab driver on August 10, 1976. During bench trial for that offense a year later, on September 21, 1977, the victim cab driver had completed the first half of his testimony, and the trial was continued for two days to complete cross examination of his testimony. While on bond during those two days, Mr. Robinson determined that he would not go to prison for this crime and devised a plan with his co-offender/girlfriend. He acquired a .38 caliber handgun and a stocking to cover his face. He gained the victim's initial home address information from police reports for the original crime with the intent of hunting down the victim in order to execute him prior to testifying again.



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It was discovered that the victim had since moved from that address, so Mr. Robinson looked up the victim by name in the phone book and found only one other listing about a block away. He had his girlfriend call the address to verify the person lived there and assumed it was the same individual.

Mr. Robinson then traveled to the apartment, armed with the handgun, and was buzzed into the building. Unbeknownst to Mr. Robinson, he arrived at the home of a completely unrelated individual with the same last name as his victim. The father of this individual answered the door, and upon seeing the stocking covered face and handgun, attempted to shut the door. Mr. Robinson forced his way into the apartment and fired 3 shots into the murder victim under the assumption that he was shooting the original testifying victim in his armed robbery case.

The murder victim survived long enough to give a report to the police, but ultimately succumbed to his injuries and died. A palm print was found on the door of the murder victim which perfectly matched the petitioner. When the original testifying victim reported to trial on September 23, 1977 to finish testifying, Mr. Robinson realized he had shot the wrong person and admitted as much to the friend who was in the car the night of the murder. Mr. Robinson was arrested at home the following day, found hiding behind a dresser and in possession of a firearm. Mr. Robinson claimed he couldn't have done the crime or been pulled over by the police in the neighborhood as claimed because he didn't have a car, however his sister confirmed that he had borrowed her car throughout that time and until September 23<sup>rd</sup>. He claimed to have an alibi with another girlfriend that night, but that other girlfriend also confirmed that she had only seen him outside around 5 p.m. and not again until 11 p.m. after the time of the murder.

Mr. Robinson was charged for the armed robbery and sentenced to 4 to 6 years in 1977. While on trial for the murder, Mr. Robinson attempted escape from custody twice. He was ultimately sentenced to 200 to 600 years for the murder in 1979. It was noted that had Mr. Robinson successfully murdered the testifying victim instead of another innocent party, he would have been eligible for the death penalty.

Years later in 1984, Mr. Robinson was convicted of Aggravated Battery with Great Bodily Harm to a corrections officer after battering him with a mop handle. He was sentenced to an additional 4 years.

### **MR. ROBINSON'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSES**

Mr. Robinson does not acknowledge the facts of the crime or take responsibility for his actions, but rather is still claiming actual innocence of the crime of murder. He states he feels sympathy for their loss but, does not feel guilt. He is adamant that he was with his girlfriend, and therefore could not have done it. He also claims that he can prove that the police fabricated the evidence to prove he did it, claiming that the police never actually collected the palm print



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from the door and that they staged the evidence against him. Mr. Robinson acknowledges that he was making poor choices in life at the time of the offenses, namely the armed robbery, but he didn't commit the murder.

### **CRIMINAL HISTORY**

Mr. Robinson was arrested over 20 times in the period from 1970 until he was convicted of the armed robbery in 1977. His arrests included assault, theft, battery, unlawful use of weapons, aggravated assaults, resisting arrest, burglaries, and ultimately the armed robbery before committing murder. Mr. Robinson argues that all these arrests were misdemeanors or supervision but never any felonies. He was under supervision and probation on more than one occasion and often violated those conditions because of his numerous offenses.

In 1984, he was convicted of Aggravated Battery with Great Bodily Harm to a corrections officer while in IDOC custody and sentenced to another 4 years. Petitioner stated he was in segregation at the time of the offense. He refused to enter his cell as instructed, then began fighting while resisting and assaulted the officer with the mop handle. Mr. Robinson claims he plead guilty.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT**

Mr. Robinson's institutional adjustment is a troublesome one, marked with a life of institutional infractions and little in the way of rehabilitation, family or community support. He has two sisters, one son, and a niece. He has no contact with any of them. Mr. Robinson has zero letters of support from family or community.

Mr. Robinson is in good health relatively speaking.

Mr. Robinson has engaged in almost no programming or services to date. After his last En Banc in February of 2021, it was understood that he needed to start making some efforts. Mr. Robinson has since signed up for anger management as well as GED classes, but has not taken part in anything at this time.

Mr. Robinson has a horrific ticket history that includes a significant amount of physical violence including injury to both inmates and corrections officers. He has eleven pages of tickets prior to 2000 on the old forms. Since 2000, Mr. Robinson has accrued 35 major tickets including 16 assaults or other acts of violence, and 2 minor tickets. From 1980 to 1992, there is documentation of a total of 15 years of good conduct credit time being revoked. In addition, there is the 1984 Aggravated Battery conviction which added 4 years of sentencing.



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There is a clear note in the 2021 report for Offender Overview that the petitioner has Security Threat Group Affiliation as a member of the Black Disciples and is designated as having a moderate aggression level. Mr. Robinson claims he has no affiliation, and that he renounced sometime in 2018/2019 when he came to Lawrence because, “there are no gangs in Lawrence.”

His last ticket for violence was thought to be in October of 2019 for a serious threat to break a television and stab his cell mate. It was discovered during this interview that the petitioner had at least one additional 2021 major ticket for fighting on October 4, 2021 when he was the primary aggressor while hitting his cell mate first during an altercation. Mr. Robinson stated that the cell mate was a petty thief.

Mr. Robinson has minimal work history to discuss. He worked in Cold Storage in 1991 while at Pontiac, worked in the Taylor Shop in 2000 while in Statesville, and there is a note about a Dietary Assignment from March 5, 2021 to August 21, 2021 while in Lawrence.

Mr. Robinson appears to have spent 7 years and some months in segregation since 2001. He is currently a medium security risk with no escape risk. He has been A Grade since April 4, 2020 but is still designated as a moderate aggression level. Status change is believed to have happened in March of 2021. As recently as 2017, Mr. Robinson was still a maximum level security risk with a moderate escape risk.

### **PAROLE PLANS**

At the time of the interview, Mr. Robinson’s parole plan was undeveloped. The plan was and is to be accepted to the program at St. Leonard’s. At the time of the interview, nobody had initiated any outreach and Mr. Robinson wasn’t pushing for any. Mr. Robinson’s counsel believes he would be accepted for halfway housing and services and intended to reach out to Field Services. The petition recently submitted seems to indicate there is a pending application now.

Mr. Robinson already qualifies for Medicare and other government assistance. He hopes to find a job, but states, “I have no skills.” If accepted, St. Leonard’s does offer job training and other programming including anger management. Mr. Robinson has no health issues that pose a hindrance to parole. He has no community or familial support at this time.

### **OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE**

The Cook County State’s Attorney submitted a long letter of strong opposition in February of 2021 at the time of the last En Banc. A lengthy account of the statement of facts is



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given followed by opposition based on deprecation of seriousness due to his claim of actual innocence mixed with the severity of pre-meditated attempted murder of a testifying victim in a criminal proceeding resulting in the murder of another innocent victim. Opposition is also based on a substantially adverse effect on institutional discipline given his track record of violence toward inmates and staff throughout the entirety of his incarceration; as well as for a substantial risk that Mr. Robinson won't comply with conditions of parole given his failure to comply with rules in the institution, and the fact that he violated his bond when he committed the murder.

### **EN BANC HISTORY**

Mr. Robinson first became eligible for parole consideration in 1999. He has been presented for parole nine times prior. Throughout that time, Mr. Robinson has only received two votes in favor of granting parole, both of which were received at the 2020 En Banc which took place in February of 2021. He received 3-year sets in 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, and 2017. He received a 5-year set in 2012.

### **DISCUSSION**

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Mr. Robinson's legal counsel, Ms. Carolyn Klarquist, read a letter from the family. Ms. Klarquist stated that Mr. Robinson disputes the fact that he is a gang member. She stated that the reason Mr. Robinson was in a physical altercation with his cellmate was because his cellmate tried to steal his shoes. She stated that he is fearful of younger inmates. Ms. Klarquist discussed that Mr. Robinson keeps to himself. She stated that Mr. Robinson did appreciate the 2 votes at the February En Banc. She also stated that these votes were encouraging to Mr. Robinson and requested more votes to help encourage him to do even better. Ms. Klarquist stated that Mr. Robinson is very self-aware, that he knows he needs to do what is asked of him by the board. She also discussed that there is an application pending to St. Leonard's.

Ms. Martinez discussed Mr. Robinson's trust issues. She stated that he does not trust anyone now and will not trust people at St. Leonard's that he will need to work with.

Ms. Klarquist stated that Mr. Robinson knows that he will need to work with people. That he does trust some people. She discussed that Mr. Robinson is a 70-year old man and he knows that he needs to make more of an effort to continue to build.

Mr. Ruggiero questioned Mr. Robinson's date of birth. He then discussed that votes are supposed to be used for being paroled and not for motivation. Mr. Ruggiero stated that Mr. Robinson's institutional adjustment is horrendous.



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Mr. Findley asked if Mr. Robinson's most recent ticket was this year.

There was a discussion on the most recent ticket being the fight with his cellmate over a pair of shoes and that Mr. Robinson received Segregation for fighting. Also, past tickets and fighting with guards were discussed.

Mr. Findley stated that when he makes a vote, he asks himself if he would like to have that person living next door to him and asked Ms. Klarquist if she would like Mr. Robinson to live next door to her. She responded that she would like if Mr. Robinson lived next door to her if he was also next door to St. Leonard's, where he would be working with people to help him.

Mr. Bohland stated that to parole Mr. Robinson would deprecate the seriousness of the crime. He stated that between the disciplinary report and not having a parole plan he could not vote to parole.

### **DECISION AND RATIONALE**

Motion to deny parole (JB—JR). Motion prevails by a vote of 13-1. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Ms. Miller, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy and Mrs. Wilson. Chairman Findley dissented.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Robinson'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. Robinson 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—December 16, 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 December 16, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Oscar Curtis\* C02117.

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

Recording Secretary: Andrea Hegland.

**PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE**

November 16, 2021 via WebEx video system Mr. Oscar Curtis C02117 was interviewed, also on the call that day was his attorney Carolyn Klarquist. Mr. Curtis is currently incarcerated at Lincoln C.C. which is an adult male minimum security facility since 9/7/2018. Mr. Curtis is 70 years old. His three different assignments at the facility are: LTS helper, housing unit porter and dietary dept. worker. Mr. Curtis was 22 years of age when he was sentenced to 75-90 years for the murder of Vivian Shepherd and 15years – life for the attempt murder of Mona Richardson. Both sentences were to be ran consecutively. Mr. Curtis was polite, attentive, and cooperated in answering any questions asked. His appearance was appropriate, and he seemed to be in good health. Mr. Curtis entered IDOC 1/29/1975 which adds up to (46 years incarcerated).

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

On October 14, 1973 the two defendants, Louis Cokes and Oscar Curtis picked up the victims 19-year-old Vivian Shepherd and 16-year-old Mona Richardson. After riding around for some time in the car that Oscar Curtis was driving, he pulled the car over and parked near the band shell at Garfield Park. At approximately 10:30 PM the defendants ordered the victims to disrobe and have sex with them. Both victims resisted and that is when Ms. Shepherd was dragged from the car, choked, and shot in the head by Mr. Curtis. She was still able to resist for a short while after being shot. At that time Mr. Curtis gave Mr. Cokes the gun while he slashed and stabbed her in the neck and throat with a broken bottle, meanwhile Mr. Cokes help hold her down with his foot and stomping on Ms. Vivian Shepherd's head while he used the gun to intimidate and keep Ms. Mona Richardson in the car. Mr. Cokes then went and drug Ms. Richardson from the car, then both men began to beat, slash, and stab her in the throat and neck





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with the same glass weapon used on Ms. Shepherd. Somehow, she was able to free herself and run to a nearby gas station for help and that is when the police were called. While being treated in the hospital Ms. Richards identified both Oscar Curtis and Louis Cokes from a group of photos shown to her by police. She stated she knew both men prior to the attack.

Both attackers were found and arrested at 1553 South Kolin. Also, in that same room, a .32 caliber handgun was found. Mr. Curtis admitted ownership of the gun. A firearms expert testified that this weapon could have fired the lethal bullet into Miss Shepherd's head. It was noted that the characteristics of the gun and the murder bullet matched, but there were insufficient number of individual markings on the mutilated bullet recovered from the murder victim to show a conclusive comparison. It was also noted that both victims' blood types were found on Mr. Cokes' shoes. 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 resentenced Mr. Curtis to his same sentences he originally received but ordered that they run concurrently. The trial court also resentenced Mr. Cokes to the same sentence that he originally received. On November 1, 1998, Mr. Cokes died while in IDOC custody. Mr. Curtis filed a petition for a post-conviction relief alleging that his sentence was unconstitutional and void. The court granted the State's Motion to Dismiss his petition on December 3, 2008. It was affirmed on appeal. On February 14, 2014, Mr. Curtis filed a Pro Se Motion for Declaratory Judgment. That motion was summarily dismissed on February 24, 2014. The dismissal was affirmed on appeal in 2015.

### **MR. CURTIS' STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSES**

Mr. Curtis stated in his interview that he agreed to give the two females a ride to the park area where they could conduct some business, he knew Vivian because he was dating her sister. Before they pulled over at the park the females began to argue inside the car in such a manner that he made Vivian sit up front with him and Mona sit in the back with Mr. Cokes. He stated the fighting was about heroin. When they did arrive at the park area the females exited the vehicle and the argument turned into a fight between the two of them. It was not until he and Mr. Cokes heard a gunshot that they exited the car to see what was happening and that is when they saw the two females engaged in a serious fight (DEATH ROLL). Mr. Curtis and Mr. Cokes exited the car and ran toward the females as they were actively engaged in the fight to help break it up. He stated that Mona was very upset that he was trying to break them up and she raised the gun in his direction and that is when Vivian stepped in front of him and took the bullet intended for him, and he did NOT fire the gunshot that killed Vivian. When asked about the cuts and puncture wounds on both victims, Mr. Curtis stated that it had to be a result of the two of them fighting but it was too dark to see details like that. After Vivian was shot, Mr. Curtis stated he carried her for quite a distance wanting to get help for her and that she was still alive at that time but died soon after. Before Mr. Curtis left the scene, he did admit to taking the gun with him. In closing, talking about the details of the crime Mr. Curtis stated he takes full responsibility for everything



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to do with this crime, and that is to help everyone involved including himself to finally have closure.

Over the years, Mr. Curtis' story about his involvement in the crime has changed drastically. In November 2004, he denied any involvement in the crime. In 2005, he stated the females were involved in a fight and he tried to break it up. In 2006, he was just in the wrong place at that wrong time and Mr. Cokes is the one who shot Vivian Shepherd and tried to kill the other girl. In 2007, he refused to comment on events due to the upcoming trial. In 2008, no admission of involvement. Finally, in 2011, Mr. Curtis stated that he and Mr. Cokes were not responsible at all. All his previous offenses were violent in nature and almost always involved the use of a weapon. Mr. Curtis had no remorse for his behavior and seemed to feel justified in his offenses. Mr. Curtis considers himself a victim of society and has set his own standards in life.

### **CRIMINAL HISTORY**

Prior to being convicted of the murder and attempted murder in this case, Mr. Curtis had a substantial criminal history as a young adult. In May of 1969, he was arrested for unlawful use of a weapon and failure to register that firearm (charges were dismissed.) In July 1969, he was arrested for armed robbery and sentenced to five years probation, with the first six months to be spent in the Department of Corrections. Nine months after being placed on probation, he was arrested for burglary. After the burglary charge was reduced to theft as part of a plea, he was sentenced to 45 days in the Department of Corrections. In July 1970, less than one year after being placed on that probation, he was found in violation of probation and it was revoked. Mr. Curtis was re-sentenced to 2-3 years in prison. In December 1970, he was indicted for murder, case number 70-3672. Mr. Curtis along with two accomplices (all of them being armed) held up a grocery store in March 1970. During the armed robbery a 63-year-old store owner was shot and killed. In January 1971, after the charge was reduced to voluntary manslaughter, Mr. Curtis plead guilty in exchange for a sentence of 2-4 years in prison. In June of 1973, Mr. Curtis was discharged from parole on the manslaughter conviction. In October of 1973, less than four months after being discharged from that parole, he was convicted of the murder of Vivian Shepard and the brutal attack of Mona Richardson.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT**

Mr. Curtis was born in Chicago, IL. His mother and father grew up in Georgia and Tennessee, respectfully, and met after coming to Chicago in search of work in the 1940s. When Mr. Curtis was six years old, his father, who worked as a delivery man and Carpenter died at the age of 29. His brother Albert died in 1995 at a young age. His mother died at the age of 80 in 1977. Mr. Curtis has an older sister who lives in Georgia. They have a good relationship and exchange letters occasionally. He describes a relatively nice childhood growing up on the West



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side of Chicago. Mr. Curtis dropped out of high school and had little direction. He decided to join the Marine Corps and was denied due to his young age. He worked odd jobs around the neighborhood. Mr. Curtis' disciplinary record was quite active in his early years of incarceration but improved drastically as the years went on. His last ticket was in 2019 and he has not had a major ticket since 2015. Mr. Curtis stated he keeps to himself and concentrates on his job assignments.

Mr. Curtis has been assigned to several different institutions throughout his time spent in IDOC. Those Institutions include Joliet, Statesville, Menard, Danville, Logan, Pontiac, Pinckneyville, and Lincoln.

### **PAROLE PLANS**

Mr. Curtis has been accepted to live at St. Leonard's Ministries. While being incarcerated, he has sought to further his education and obtained his high school diploma in 2008, and his Food Service Sanitation Manager Certification. Mr. Curtis also obtained a certificate pertaining to food service from Rend Lake College in 2010. If released, he would like to work in the food service business as a chef and has many ideas on serving food in a safe manor during a pandemic situation.

### **OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE**

There was an opposition letter from November of 2020 from The Cook County State's Attorney's office.

### **EN BANC HISTORY**

Mr. Curtis has been heard for parole consideration approximately 33 times with the first time being in 1983. It was noted last year that he had never received a motion in favor of parole. He received a three-year set in 2014, 2011, and 2008.

### **DISCUSSION**

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

Ms. Carolyn Klarquist was present on behalf of Mr. Oscar Curtis as his counsel. Ms. Klarquist stated that Mr. Curtis is 70 years old and that he is very remorseful. She discussed that he accepts the facts of the trial and that is what he has carved out to accept. She stated that Mr. Curtis has stated that this crime was all his fault and that it is painful for him to relive. Ms. Klarquist discussed Mr. Curtis' disciplinary history and how short it was. She stated that he has grown and matured throughout the years of incarceration and that he stays to himself and writes poetry.



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Ms. Klarquist discussed the 1968 manslaughter charges. She stated that there was a robbery going on and that Mr. Curtis plead out. She also stated that his prison record was good and that there is not any concern of violence. Ms. Klarquist stated that Mr. Curtis was last in a verbal altercation in 2011 and that he can conform. She stated that he can also find employment and is a perfect candidate for St. Leonard's. Ms. Klarquist stated that Mr. Curtis did this crime when he was 21 years old and that he has been incarcerated for 46 years.

Mr. Mears and Ms. Perkins discuss if Mr. Curtis was the shooter. It is noted that the Statement of Facts states that Mr. Curtis was the shooter.

Ms. Crigler stated that Mr. Curtis is a polite man and a writer. She discussed that the problem is that he is in denial of this horrific crime. She stated that it is her opinion that, this is his way of protecting himself. She noted that Mr. Curtis needs psychiatric support, that he cannot take accountability, and he is emotionally in denial. Ms. Crigler stated that when asked about cuts on the women he got angry and would not take responsibility.

Mr. Shelton discussed Mr. Curtis' disciplinary record. He stated that it is not that long for as long as Mr. Curtis has been incarcerated. Mr. Shelton also stated his concern with Mr. Curtis getting angry when confronted. He questioned how Mr. Curtis would act outside of the facility when confronted. Ms. Klarquist answered that Mr. Curtis has toned down his anger and has done it all on his own. She stated that he needs to rectify with his maker and needs the support of St. Leonard's.

Mr. Ruggiero noted that the Statement of Facts states that the crime started when Mr. Curtis wanted the women to disrobe and have sex with him.

Mr. Tupy stated that Mr. Curtis threatened the State's Attorney in open court and that he cannot support him.

Mr. Mears noted that when Mr. Curtis "threatened" the State's Attorney in open court, that he asked how he could do that and then walked away. Mr. Mears also noted that when Mr. Curtis was angry with Ms. Crigler, he was angry about the technology not working. Mr. Mears stated that Mr. Curtis was apologetic to Ms. Crigler for getting angry.

Mr. James stated there was not a need to hash out what took place 4 years ago, but to look at Mr. Curtis' adjustment. He then questions if Mr. Curtis ever took accountability. To which Mr. Mears stated that Mr. Curtis took responsibility for everyone's sake, but the details were still that he did not do it.



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Mr. Findley stated that when is enough, enough. He stated that the board has paroled people that have done horrific crimes and that people at St. Leonard's rarely ever re-offend. He also stated that justice has been served.

It is noted that if parole is granted the Attorney General's Office requested a 90 stay for a Sexually Violent Persons Evaluation.

**DECISION AND RATIONALE**

Motion to grant parole (JM—OJ). Motion prevails by a vote of 8-6. Members voting in favor of the motion were Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Mrs. Perkins, Mrs. Wilson, and Chairman Findley. Mr. Bohland, Mr. Cerda, Ms. Miller, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, and Mr. Tupy dissented.

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

**EN BANC MINUTE SHEET**  
**OPEN SESSION—December 16, 2021**

Name: **MICHAEL HENDERSON\*** IDOC Number: **C81919**

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board met in open *en banc* session at 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois, on December 16, 2021, at the 9:00 a.m. session to discuss and deliberate parole eligibility for Michael Henderson\* C81919.

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

Recording Secretary: Andrea Hegland



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**PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW AND FILE**

Michael Henderson C81919 was interviewed live via WebEx virtual platform from Dixon Treatment Center on Friday, November 12, 2021 at 9:30am. Mr. Henderson communicated clearly and without issue. He appeared to be in good health. He answered the questions as asked in short responses. He was very soft spoken. Mr. Henderson has been in continuous custody since September 16, 1976. He is currently 62 years of age. Mr. Henderson stated during the interview that he knew the victim very well. Mr. Henderson stated at the end of the interview that "it would be a chance that we would have to take if we let him out, as to whether he would re-offend."

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

Mr. Henderson is serving a sentence of 60-120 years for the September 15, 1976 murder of his 87-year old neighbor, Zelder Wilson, having initially been charged with Murder and Rape.

Mr. Henderson gained entry to the victim's apartment by asking for a glass of water. He then announced that he wanted to have sex and directed her into the bedroom. He raped her in the bedroom. After raping her, he stabbed and beat her to death, leaving her on the floor of the kitchen. After trying to wash up in the victim's bathroom, he left her apartment with blood still on his hands, wiping the blood on the wall of the first-floor landing. He went and took a shower and changed clothes at his sister's house. He then put his bloody clothes in his sister's laundry bag. About two hours later, while exiting the apartment, Mr. Henderson told a man who lived in the third floor of the apartment building that Mr. Henderson had seen a man run out of the victim's apartment, and asked this neighbor to check on the victim. The man's discovery of the victim's body was the start of the murder investigation. Mr. Henderson, who had been the subject of prior arrests, was questioned by the police and immediately became a suspect. Within a short time, Mr. Henderson was under arrest and making admissions to the crime. During the pre-trial proceedings, a psychologist for the defense and a psychiatrist for the State revealed that Mr. Henderson was mentally retarded, statements which were backed up by periodic IQ testing reports acquired by Chicago Public Schools. Notwithstanding those issues, Mr. Henderson was declared competent to stand trial.

**MR HENDERSON'S STATEMENTS AS TO THE OFFENSES**

Mr. Henderson stated that he did not go into the victim's apartment to rape and murder her that day. He stated that he went crazy on that day and that's what happened. He stated that



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he did not take a weapon with him into the apartment and used a kitchen knife from the victim's kitchen. He also stated that he doesn't remember a lot of the details of the incident. He stated that he has a hard time remembering things now.

### **CRIMINAL HISTORY**

Mr. Henderson was first arrested at age 17. He was arrested at age 18 for this current charge. In 1987, while in the Department of Corrections, he was charged with Aggravated Criminal Sexual Assault of another inmate.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT**

Mr. Henderson's institutional adjustment has been troublesome.

Mr. Henderson has not had a visit from family since 1993. He states that he talks with his sister and brother occasionally. He talked about an Aunt that lives on the West Side of Chicago and that's who he would like to live with. However, he didn't have an address for her.

Mr. Henderson has a terrible disciplinary record. He has had 17 sexual misconduct tickets and 2 of these were in 2020. He has a complete disregard for any respect for the female correctional officers. The facility states that he has no regard for any rules in the institution. Mr. Henderson has not completed or attended any treatment or educational classes to improve himself during his incarceration.

### **PAROLE PLANS**

Mr. Henderson states that he will go to his Aunt's house upon parole to live with her on the South Side of Chicago. However, he could not give the address or phone number for this individual.

### **OPPOSITION TO PAROLE RELEASE**

The Cook County State's Attorney, Kimberly Foxx submitted a letter of strong opposition in November 2020. He also has family members that sent letters opposing his release.



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**EN BANC HISTORY**

Mr. Henderson has been presented for parole 22 previous times, without any votes in favor of granting parole.

**DISCUSSION**

Summary of discussion for parole consideration:

The Board had no discussion for parole consideration after the presentation of the interview and file information was completed.

**DECISION AND RATIONALE**

Motion to deny parole (KT—JR). Motion prevails by a vote of 14–0. Members voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Bohland, Mr. Cerda, Ms. Crigler, Ms. Daniels, Mr. James, Ms. Martinez, Mr. Mears, Ms. Miller, Mrs. Perkins, Mr. Ruggiero, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Tupy, Mrs. Wilson, and Chairman Findley.

After thorough consideration of Mr. Henderson’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. Henderson 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*