



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
INDETERMINATE SENTENCE REVIEW BOARD
P.O. BOX 40907, OLYMPIA, WA 98504-0907

DECISION AND REASONS

NAME: BETANCOURT, Adam
DOC #: 768174
FACILITY: Airway Heights Corrections Center
DATE OF HEARING: June 26, 2018
TYPE OF HEARING: LT JUVBRD
PANEL MEMBERS: Lori Ramsdell-Gilkey, Jeff Patnode, Kecia Rongen and Elyse Balmert
FINAL DECISION DATE: July 17, 2018

This matter came before the above named Board Members of the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB or the Board) for a release hearing in accordance with RCW 9.94A.730. In preparation for the hearing, the Board reviewed Mr. Betancourt's ISRB file. Classification Counselor (CC) Ernest Lawrence provided a summary of programming, behavior and other relevant activities regarding Mr. Betancourt. Mr. Betancourt appeared in person and was not represented by an attorney as Mr. Ellis was unable to attend. The Board verified with Mr. Betancourt that it was his desire to proceed with the hearing as scheduled.

CURRENT BOARD DECISION:

Based on the burden of proof set out in RCW 9.94A.730 and the totality of evidence and information provided to the Board, the Board does find by a preponderance of the evidence that Mr. Betancourt is more likely than not to commit any new criminal law violations if released on conditions. Consequently, the Board finds Mr. Betancourt not releasable. Mr. Betancourt can re-submit a petition for review in June of 2023.

NEXT ACTION:

Submit a petition for review to the Board in June of 2023.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

This was a deferred decision following a full Board discussion using a structured decision-making framework that takes into consideration: the statistical estimate of risk, criminal history, release history, ability to control behavior, responsivity to programming, demonstrated offender change, release planning, discordant information, and other case specific factors. Based on the requirements of RCW 9.94A.730 the Board finds Mr. Betancourt is more likely than not to commit a new crime if released. Mr. Betancourt is determined to be not releasable based on the following:

- **Has not participated in sober support groups as recommended**
- **Used drugs throughout the majority of his incarceration**
- **Introduced drugs into the facility in 2009 which could have resulted in criminal charges**
- **Has served less than ½ of the sentence imposed**
- **32 serious infractions with the last in 2009**
- **Continues to incur negative behavior observations**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mr. Betancourt should attend sober support groups, Bridges to Life, remain infraction free, reduce negative behavior observations, and participate in any other programming available to him.

JURISDICTION:

RCW 9.94A.730, enacted in 2014, allows offenders who were under the age of 18 when they committed their crime(s) and were sentenced as adults to petition the Board for consideration of early release consideration after serving no less than 20 years of total confinement. Mr. Betancourt's petition resulted in the hearing on this date.

Adam Betancourt is under the jurisdiction of the Board on a December 23, 1997, conviction of Murder in the First Degree, Counts I and II, in Grant County under Cause #97-1-00295-1. His time start is December 24, 1997. His minimum term was set at 300 months on **each count, to be served consecutively** for a total of 600 months, from a Sentencing Reform Act (SRA) range of 240 to 300 months. His maximum term is Life. Mr. Betancourt has served approximately 244 months in prison, plus 217 days of jail time credit.

OFFENSE DESCRIPTION:

According to file material, Mr. Betancourt, at his age of 16, participated in the murders of an elderly couple in Grant County, Washington. In the early morning hours of May 21, 1997, Adam Betancourt, Donald Lambert (age 15) and Marcus “David” Wawers (age 15), armed themselves and walked to the home of an elderly couple who were well known in the community. They stopped at an outbuilding and stole a few items, then proceeded to the residence. They all entered through an unlocked sliding door. Mr. Betancourt and Mr. Lambert entered the victims’ bedroom and found them both lying in bed. Mr. Betancourt and Mr. Lambert both began shooting at the victims. All three co-defendants then ran from the home.

Once outside, Mr. Betancourt and Mr. Lambert reloaded their guns, then exchanged them with each other. Now Mr. Betancourt was armed with a rifle and Mr. Lambert had the handgun. They observed someone walking inside the house and both boys fired at this figure, later to be identified as the female victim. The victim made it to the telephone in the kitchen and called her adult son. While she was on the phone with him, Mr. Betancourt shot her through the window. Within a short period all three co-defendants were arrested and charged, along with a minor female who had been aware of the planned offense.

PRIOR RISK RELATED/ CRIMINAL CONDUCT:

Mr. Betancourt incurred no juvenile convictions prior to the current offense. According to the pre-sentence report he quit school in the 9th grade. He began using alcohol, meth, and marijuana at age 13. He does have an admitted history of gang involvement (Sureno) since his early teens.

PROGRESS/BEHAVIOR:

CC Lawrence stated Mr. Betancourt has completed the following courses/programming: Redemption; GED; Horticulture; Vocational Writing; Human Relations; Mathematics for the Trade; Astronomy; Algebra; Biology of Drug use; African American Studies; Math Prep; Business; Understand Family Violence; Literature and Society; Job Seeking Skills; Small Business Management Entrepreneur; Chemical Dependency Intensive Out-patient Treatment; Advanced Skill Building; Thinking for a Change; Bee Keeping; Dog Handler; Life Skills Computing; and Homebuilders Carpentry. He is currently a Teacher's Assistant in the Homebuilders program. While in prison he has previously worked as a custodian, stock clerk, maintenance helper, welder, print press operator and food packer/handler.

Mr. Lawrence noted Mr. Betancourt is not a problem on the living unit. He is helpful to staff and communicates well with staff and other inmates.

Mr. Betancourt has incurred a total of 32 serious infractions during his incarceration. Several were for fighting. His last serious infraction was in 2009. This involved the use of drugs. He had swallowed two small balloons, one with methamphetamine in it and the other with heroin. The balloons broke and he overdosed on the drugs. He admitted in today's hearing that he had planned on selling the drugs. He also stated that since that time he has not used drugs in any manner. He has nine positive behavior observation entries and 12 negative entries.

Mr. Betancourt stated after the overdose in 2009 he started to turn things around. He began distancing himself from the gang and was fully out of the gang by 2015. Prior to the overdose incident he was using drugs throughout much of his prison time. He stated he did not care about himself or anyone else and did what he wanted to. He completed Substance Abuse Treatment in 2016. Though sober support group participation was recommended, he has not participated in any sober support groups such as AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)/NA (Narcotics Anonymous) or

Celebrate Recovery since then. When asked why he had not done so he basically said he was busy with other programming.

Mr. Betancourt stated he met a woman who later became his wife through a fellow inmate. He indicated she was a drug user and a criminal just like him. They officially married in 2011 and he filed for divorce in 2014 or 2015 and it was final in 2016. He stated his wife was not happy with his decision to leave the gang and quit using drugs.

He is currently engaged to another woman he met in 2015 during this incarceration. He described her as a friend of an old cellmate. He stated she is law abiding and is employed as a phlebotomist. He stated he has disclosed all of his crimes and infractions to her. She has three daughters ages 20, 18, and 16. The 16 year old lives at home with her mother. Mr. Betancourt stated his first option would be to release to his fiancée. He stated he has a good relationship with her and her daughters. The Board advised Mr. Betancourt that we have seen few of these prison relationships work out once the inmate is released. The dynamics of the relationship changes and the adjustment is sometimes too much for either party to handle. He said that if he cannot live with his fiancée he does have a friend he can live with. He also stated his father and other family members are supportive of him.

The Board asked Mr. Betancourt what had changed since he came to prison and what has caused the change. He said he had a mentor inside who explained to him that his negative actions in prison were continuing to harm people. He said a Victim Awareness Class he took was instrumental, as well. He stated prior to that he did not consider what the victims or survivors might feel. He now feels deeply remorseful for what he did and the pain he caused the family members.

The Board asked Mr. Betancourt about a claim he had made of meeting with the victims' "grandson" while he was in prison. He described the incident of meeting a young man that he

apparently assumed was the grandson of his victims. He indicated at first they were friendly with each other until the other man discovered what Mr. Betancourt was in prison for.

The Board reviewed the Psychological Evaluation completed by Deborah Wentworth, PhD, this year. Several tests were conducted during an interview with Mr. Betancourt. The Hare Psychopathy Check List Revised (PCL-R) scored in the very low range for psychopathy and indicated his risk for reoffending is low. The VRAG-R predicts violence. Mr. Betancourt was described as a moderate risk for re-offense on this tool.

The Grant County Prosecutor's office submitted a letter stating their office recommended the original sentence of 600 months be adhered to and stated they oppose any reduction in this.

The Board also considered the numerous letters of concern, as well as many of letters of support that were submitted on Mr. Betancourt's behalf.

LRG:jas

July 10, 2018

July 17, 2018

July 24, 2018

cc: Institution
Adam Betancourt
File
Jeffrey Ellis, Attorney



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TO: Full Board

FROM: LRG (Jody)

RE: Betancourt, Adam DOC #768174

Panel recommends: Not releasable.

Next action: Submit a petition for review in June of 2023.

Agree	Disagree
Lori Ramsdell-Gilkey 7/16/18 Jeff Patnode 7/16/18 Elyse Balmert 7/16/18 Kecia Rongen 7/17/18	