



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

**DECISION AND REASONS**

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NAME: Martin, Karen  
DOC #: 315372  
FACILITY: Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW)  
TYPE OF HEARING: .100 Hearing  
HEARING DATE: August 16, 2017  
PANEL MEMBERS: Elyse Balmert & Kecia Rongen  
FINAL DECISION DATE: August 28, 2017

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This matter came before Elyse Balmert and Kecia Rongen, who are members of the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB or the Board) on the above date for a release hearing in accordance with the provisions of RCW 9.95.100. Ms. Martin appeared in person and was represented by attorneys Erika Bleyl and Sarah Lippek. Testimony was provided by Department of Corrections (DOC) Classification Counselor (CC) Francis Reyes and Ms. Martin. Also present at the hearing was Sherri Albrecht, Community Corrections Specialist 3.

**BOARD DECISION:**

Based on the requirements of RCW 9.95.009(3) and RCW 9.95.100 and the totality of evidence and information considered by the Board, the Board finds that Ms. Martin is not parolable, does not add any time, and makes no adjustment to her minimum term.

**NEXT ACTION:**

Schedule .100 Hearing 120 days prior to her ERD.

**JURISDICTION:**

Karen Martin is under the jurisdiction of the Board on a February 8, 2008 conviction in King Cause No. 06-1-12278-6 for Murder in the Second Degree. The time start is February 14, 2008. The minimum term was set at 240 months from a Sentencing Reform Act (SRA) range of 123 to 220 months. Court documents indicate this is a departure from the standard range due to the facts of the crime as agreed as part of the plea agreement. The maximum term is life. Ms. Martin has served approximately 114 months in prison, and 440 days of jail time.

**NATURE OF INDEX OFFENSE(S):**

On January 22, 1978, the victim told his oldest son he was going to meet a lady named Linda to look at a Corvette. Linda wanted to hire him to repair the car. He was to meet Linda at a bar. While at the bar waiting for Linda, he ran into some friends. While there he received a telephone call. After taking the call he told his friends that Linda had car trouble so he was going to go meet her at the Dynasty Lounge in Renton. Four days later a worker inspecting power lines on Maxwell Road in Maple Valley discovered the victim's body lying at the foot of an embankment. The victim's body was still clothed in the same brown suit he was last seen in prior to going to meet Linda at the Dynasty Lounge. No identification or wallet was found on the victim's body. The victim had been shot three times at close range – once in the back of the head and twice in the center of his chest by a .22 magnum revolver. Across the road from the body were six cans of Olympia beer. Homicide investigators spent months trying to find Linda, or the woman who had given the victim that name. They were unsuccessful.

For nearly twenty-five years the victim's murder was unsolved. In either 2005 or 2006 the King County Sheriff's Office learned that approximately one year after the murder, Karen Martin (then Karen Cox) admitted to the murder at a US Attorney's office. Ms. Martin stated that after the murder she discovered her husband was contacting police departments in an effort to implicate her in a variety of crimes. She then retained an attorney and contacted authorities in an attempt to exchange information for immunity from prosecution. Ms. Martin's attorney told the Assistant US Attorney (AUSA) that she had information concerning contract killings committed by a Seattle

based crime organization. The attorney told the AUSA that Ms. Martin wanted immunity in exchange for the information. The AUSA then provided Ms. Martin's attorney with a letter stating he/she would apply to the Attorney General for permission to grant Ms. Martin immunity in exchange for Ms. Martin revealing her involvement in some serious crimes that would be punishable under state law. The AUSA also stated in the letter he/she would make a strong recommendation to the county prosecutor that she not be prosecuted, and be permitted to cooperate with the local authorities in exchange for immunity. The letter also noted the recommendation would not have a binding effect. According to the Certification for Determination of Probable Cause, the King County Prosecutor's office was not advised of the immunity agreement. After Ms. Martin received the letter from the AUSA she made a number of statements to the AUSA and federal investigators. Regarding the victim's murder she stated she killed a man pursuant to a "contract" in January of 1978. She was told about the contract by her husband, who was in prison at the time, and the contract had been issued by a man involved in organized crime. She was supposed to have received \$10,000.00 for the killing, but never received any money. She believed she was hired to kill the victim because he had obtained some money "he was not supposed to have gotten". She didn't recall the victim's name, but remembered he lived in Renton, worked at an automobile dealership, his wife had died, he had children, and he was 35 to 40 years old. Ms. Martin stated she called the victim from pay phones, telling him she wanted to restore an old Corvette.

Ms. Martin also stated she had previously driven out to Maple Valley and found a spot where she could "carry out the hit", on a winding road at the top of a hill beneath some high tension wires. She admitted to having met the victim and driving out to Maple Valley under the guise of looking at the Corvette. On the way she said the victim stopped and bought a six pack of Olympia beer. When they approached the spot she had previously selected, she told the victim she had to "go to the bathroom", and pulled to the side of the road. When they got out of the car Ms. Martin told the victim she was afraid, and asked him to come over to her side of the car and stand near her with his back to her. Ms. Martin stated that when the victim turned his back, she took out her gun and shot him in the back of the head three times. The weapon used was a .22 magnum.

Ms. Martin stated she later threw the handgun off of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. She also reported after having shot the victim she threw the Olympia beer – two empty cans and four full ones – “over a bank across the street”. Ms. Martin stated she took all of the victim’s identification and wallet “to make it look like a robbery”. She then “rolled him over the embankment”. She then drove the victim’s car back to the Dynasty Lounge, and left in her car. File material indicates Ms. Martin revealed she discarded the victim’s identity as well as the shoes she had worn in various dumpsters in Tacoma. Ms. Martin reported she had never met the victim before the day she shot him. Ms. Martin told federal investigators her husband was involved with prostitution and organized crime at the time. She also reported her husband told her they would be paid \$10,000.00 to commit the murder. Ms. Martin told authorities her husband told her to use the ruse of the Corvette in need of repair. In other file material Ms. Martin admitted to having purchased the gun used in the murder. File material indicates Ms. Martin was never interviewed again by federal investigators. The US Attorney’s office apparently did not find the information she provided relevant to any investigation they were conducting. The AUSA did not call Ms. Martin as a witness in any federal proceeding, and never sought formal immunity for her.

This is a cold case. File material states that about 25 years after Ms. Martin’s admissions to the AUSA a King County Detective learned of them and re-contacted her.

The recent psychological evaluation by Dr. Wentworth dated April 17, 2017, stated Ms. Martin’s ex-husband (Leroy Cox DOC 222009) wrote letters to various law enforcement agencies wanting to have her arrested in exchange for a reduced sentence for him. In looking at OMNI, Mr. Cox was paroled in 1985. He was under the ISRB for two counts of Carnal Knowledge.

**PRIOR CRIMINAL CONDUCT:**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation report dated January 18, 1979, stated Ms. Martin had been arrested for traffic violations in approximately June 21-23, 1978 and was booked into the Pierce County Jail. She also has a Driving Under the Influence in 2002 – California.

**HISTORY/COMMENTS:**

Ms. Martin had an Administrative Board Decision in 2008 to schedule a two-year Administrative Progress Review. In 2010 a determination was made that Progress Reviews would no longer be held. This is Ms. Martin's first .100 hearing.

CC Reyes states that Ms. Martin has one Serious Infraction, 2016 - Organize/Incite Work Stoppage. Ms. Martin refused to report to her job within the institution upon call out. When asked, Ms. Martin and other inmates wanted to show support for the nationwide solidarity for mass incarceration and slave labor in prison.

Ms. Martin's description of the offense closely matches the official file material. Ms. Martin has received the following certificates: Design Services, Life Skills Computing, Strong Families, the Summer Reading Program, Technical Design, and the Domestic Violence Workshop. She has taken many educational classes while incarcerated. Ms. Martin has also been involved in the summer reading program, knitting, making blankets and hats that are donated to a hospital, and with the Sisters of Charity. Ms. Martin indicated she would like to reside with her sister in Canada if found parolable. She would like to work in the field of computers and technical design. Ms. Martin has family and friends that come for regular visits. Ms. Martin has an ICE detainer (Canadian).

Dr. Wentworth completed a Psychological Evaluation dated April 17, 2017. Regarding the VRAG-R, Dr. Wentworth noted it was used to assess risk factors for Ms. Martin for informational purposes only and not as a formal risk evaluation. Her scores place her in the lowest possible bin. Her 30 year crime-free period of exposure to risk in the community without incurring any significant charges further reduces her risk level at the rate of 10% per year. Ms. Martin's SAPROF's scored in the high range of protective factors, and "her scores were a good indicator of successful transition to the community". Dr. Wentworth's report stated "Ms. Martin's overall risk level for future offending appears to be at a very low level when static (historical) and dynamic factors are balanced with her strengths and resources". Historical-Clinical-Risk

Management-20 v3 (HCR-20v3) with Female Additional Manual (FAM): Level of risk is considered low in clinical and low in future risk management. Ms. Martin's overall prediction for future violence is low, for serious physical harm is very low, and for imminent violence is very low. Structured Assessment of Protective Factors (SAPROF): Scored in the high range of protective factors. Dr. Wentworth also stated in her report, "Ms. Martin appears to be a reasonable candidate for transitioning to a less restrictive setting". Ms. Martin "would benefit from continued involvement in therapy for assertiveness training and stress and anger issues, especially concerning those that may stem from possible reintegration into the community".

**INFORMATION CONSIDERED:**

In preparation for Ms. Martin's hearing and its decision in this case, the Board completed a review of his/her ISRB file. The Board considered all information contained in that file, including but not limited to: the most recent DOC facility plan; information regarding institutional behavior and programming; any letters of support and/or concerns sent to the Board; the Pre-Sentence Investigation report; and psychological evaluation prepared by Dr. Wentworth. The Board also considered the testimony of the witnesses listed above.

In 2008 the Prosecutor recommended a minimum term of confinement of fifteen years. This recommendation was due to the defendant committing a "brutal, cold-blooded, premeditated murder for one reason: money".

**REASONS:**

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, parole/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 9.95.009 (3) and RCW 9.95.100 the Board finds Ms. Martin not parolable.

According to Ms. Martin's last Psychological Evaluation by Dr. Wentworth, her actuarial scores are low. Ms. Martin did not come forward with information about her offense which could have alleviated some of the victim's families' pain and suffering for all of those years. Instead she put her own needs before the innocent victims. The Board commends Ms. Martin on continuing her education and charitable work while incarcerated. The Board would like Ms. Martin to remain infraction free, take any programming that may be available to her, and further gain insight into her offending behavior.

EB: ffo

August 21, 2017

August 31, 2017

September 11, 2017

cc: Institution/WCCW  
Karen Martin  
Erika Bleyl, Attorney  
Sarah Lippek, Attorney  
File/ffo



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P.O. BOX 40907, OLYMPIA, WA 98504-0907

DATE: August 21, 2017

TO: Full Board

FROM: EB & KR (Fawn)

RE: Martin, Karen / DOC# 315372

Panel recommends: Not Parolable.

Next action: Schedule .100 Hearing 120 days prior to ERD.

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Elyse Balmert 8/28/17 Jeff Patnode 8/28/17 Lori Ramsdell-Gilkey 8/28/17 Kecia Rongen 8/28/17	