

NYS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION
BOARD OF PAROLE

Parole Board Interview

In the Matter

-of-

MICHELLE LENNON

DIN # 95-G-0854
NYSID # 07064469N

TYPE OF INTERVIEW: Initial

HELD AT: Taconic CF
(Video-conferenced to NYC Area Office)

HELD ON: February 4, 2014

BEFORE: COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ
COMMISSIONER ELOVICH
COMMISSIONER THOMPSON

VERBATIM REPORTER: Christina M. Wolcott

1 BY COMMISSIONER THOMPSON:

2 Q. Good afternoon. Michelle Lennon?

3 A. Yes, ma'am.

4 Q. I'm Commissioner Thompson, also on the Panel with me
5 today are Commissioners Hernandez and Elovich.

6 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Hello.

7 COMMISSIONER ELOVICH: Hello.

8 THE INMATE: Nice to meet you.

9 Q. You're here today for an initial appearance. Crime
10 of conviction Murder 2nd, serving 20 to life year
11 sentence by plea, is that correct?

12 A. Excuse me. I'm sorry. I can't hear.

13 Q. Serving a 20 to life year sentence by plea, is that
14 correct --

15 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 Q. -- for the crime of Murder 2nd?

17 A. Yes, ma'am.

18 Q. The instant offense involved you acting in concert,
19 causing the death of the victim, your husband, when he
20 was hit several times with a bat, put into a plastic
21 bag. A plastic bag was placed over his head, and it was
22 also tied with a phone cord?

23 A. Yes, ma'am.

24 Q. And then you placed the body into a vehicle and drove
25 it to a secluded wooded area in Rockland County?

1 A. Yes, I did.

2 Q. And the body was dumped in the woods and you
3 attempted to conceal it?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. What was going on? Why would you get involved in
6 such a heinous act against another human being?

7 A. I was married to him for a while where it was very
8 abusive.

9 Q. How long were you married?

10 A. Approximately two years, and I --

11 Q. And you what?

12 A. I ran numerous times. I left him many times and this
13 was yet another time and he found me. He found me again
14 and I was 23 years old. I was really, really scared and
15 I made a really, really bad choice.

16 Q. Was there documentation that there was DV issues in
17 the home? Did you call the cops? How many times, if
18 you did?

19 A. Honestly, I never called the cops. One time my
20 neighbor called the police. I never went to the police.
21 After my neighbor called the police that one time, they
22 came to the house and I was bleeding from my face and
23 they didn't do anything. They picked him up for drunk
24 driving, but they didn't do anything.

25 Q. Did you press charges?

1 A. No, ma'am, I did not. I went and picked him up the
2 next day.

3 Q. That's probably why they didn't do anything.

4 A. Probably. Probably. You know, as an alcoholic and
5 an addict and a really messed up 23 year old, I didn't
6 think straight. I was as bad as he was. I can't say
7 that one was worse than the other until I made it worse
8 than him.

9 Q. What were you under the influence of, what type of
10 drugs at the time you committed this horrendous act?

11 A. I was on alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and pills. I
12 had been doing drug since I was 12.

13 Q. All right. Is this something that you planned?

14 A. No. No, ma'am.

15 Q. So what happened that you and your co-defendant did
16 this?

17 A. When he found me again, he told me he was taking me
18 away and I thought he was going to kill me. I went in
19 the back bedroom after getting high all night and drunk
20 all night, and I said he's going to kill me. I said,
21 Rob, he's going to kill me.

22 Q. Rob was your co-defendant?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Who was he to you?

25 A. He was a boy friend. You know, today I can tell you

1 it wasn't really that he was a boy friend. He was a
2 safety net, he was a sex partner, he was a co-dependent
3 as well, needing to be with somebody not being good with
4 myself, and --

5 Q. So this all took place in your home that you resided
6 with your husband?

7 A. No, I ran. I ran and I got a cottage and I was away
8 from my husband for a few weeks, at which point my
9 husband called my father and threatened his life if he
10 didn't tell him where I was. My father would not tell
11 him, and he found me. I -- still, to this day, I don't
12 know how he found me. I don't know. He showed up at
13 the door, he said which closet is mine? You know, to
14 me, honestly, I -- I don't care if I ran 100 times. I
15 should have ran again, I should have went to the police.
16 Me, as the person that I am today, I would never allow
17 this to happen.

18 Q. All right. So where was the bat and where did you
19 get to the point where you actually committed this act?

20 A. The bat was in the bedroom, and we were standing next
21 to a closet and it was in the closet and Rob said
22 there's one way you can get away from him, and I took
23 the bat from him, I walked into the living room and I
24 attempted to hit him with the bat and he was sleeping,
25 so it was safe and it didn't really quite hit him, and

1 Rob showed me how to choke up on the back and I hit him
2 again and when I hit him -- I don't know if you would
3 ever understand to be raged and numb all at once, to be
4 now scared, oh, my God. He's going to get up, he's
5 going to kill me, he's really going to kill me now. To
6 get back into that girl's mind, I don't understand it, I
7 don't. It's like a mass of confusion. I don't
8 understand it. I just know that I was not well. I just
9 know that I was young.

10 Q. A lot of rage, right?

11 A. A lot of rage. It was a lot of rage. It like welled
12 up within me. He's the second domestic violence
13 relationship I had in four years and all this anger of
14 life just came and he took all of it, took all of it.
15 Something inside of myself, I became a monster. I was a
16 monster and I know I was a monster. I was here in
17 December and it was the first time that I literally
18 stepped back into that young girl's mind and I'm broke
19 because I would do anything to undo this and run one
20 more time and go to the police, as you say, to know what
21 then what I know now. To be the individual I am today
22 that I was not, anything today to undue it.

23 Q. Why do you think you started using drugs? You seem
24 to have a supportive family. You do have the
25 documentations and everything. I mean why not give it

1 to them? Why start using drugs and not reach out for
2 help before this occurred?

3 A. I received help from my family. My family did help
4 me. They put me in [REDACTED]. You know, I was told by

5 [REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED] that got
9 bad in school. We didn't know until I was 14. At that
10 point it was already two years of drinking and smoking
11 marijuana and I had been smoking cigarettes for years
12 and [REDACTED] I just acted
13 out. It just got worse. I didn't get better, it got
14 worse and worse until I hit my bottom and my parents
15 tried. They put me in [REDACTED]. I was in [REDACTED] for
16 literally -- I mean I had nine months sobriety. It just
17 did not reach me. I know that -- within sobriety today,
18 because I have intentional sobriety for 20 years, and I
19 know that everybody has their bottom, and I wish to God
20 that this was not my bottom, that my bottom came before
21 this and it didn't, ma'am; it didn't.

22 Q. Okay. Since you've been in, you did incur one Tier
23 III for assault on staff, that was in 2007; then two
24 Tier II's. Upon release, I know there's a letter from
25 your [REDACTED] and you also propose to reside with them in

1 [REDACTED]?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And I note there's a slue of assistance there and
4 support --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- from family and friends. Who do you have in New
7 York?

8 A. I only have a [REDACTED] of mine in New York. I don't
9 have any family that lives in New York, none.

10 Q. Because it takes time for the interstate transfer so,
11 if you were to be released, where in New York would you
12 go? Would you have to go to a shelter or to a halfway
13 house, are you able to stay with that friend?

14 A. I can stay with my friend, if necessary. However,
15 interstate transfer, I would wait in prison. I would be
16 better off in prison than in New York, in my eyes,
17 because when I step out, I want to step out on the right
18 foot, and that's straight into a re-entry program that
19 has a five-year plan, straight into the arms of all
20 these supporters that I have. I don't want to go into
21 New York and just wait for that support. No, no. I
22 want to do it correctly. I don't want to do this wrong;
23 I want to do it right.

24 Q. Okay. And how about --

25 A. So I would wait here in prison.

1 Q. How about work for you, how would you be supported?

2 A. I have a job waiting for me at [REDACTED], which
3 -- I know this is going to sound silly, but I'm so
4 excited. It's a hostess and wait staff, and I have a
5 letter of confirmation on that from commissioner, so I
6 would have a job immediately.

7 Q. How about your [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED]?

9 A. That comes with the re-entry program, because I know
10 I'm going to need that support as well. [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED], I also have a huge
12 listing of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] meetings, and I'd like to start
13 from the beginning and do 90 meetings in 90 days, so
14 that I can gather a support system within my network of,
15 you know, my sobriety; that's where it really lays. All
16 this began with me getting high, and I'm not going to
17 step back into that, so my real support system is where
18 people would understand where I'm coming from and would
19 be within a [REDACTED] or a [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] programs,
20 which the difference between now and when I was in
21 [REDACTED] years ago is that I want to be there. I didn't
22 really want [REDACTED]. I was fighting against that, so
23 really sobriety now, I'm ready.

24 Q. Okay. You say you've been sober now for what, 20
25 years?

1 A. 20 years, ma'am, almost. June makes 20 years for me.

2 Q. All right. We also have your COMPAS risk assessment
3 and that will be considered. Risk of felony violence is
4 low, criminal involvement is low, re-entry into
5 substance abuse is highly probable. As I stated, we do
6 have your packet that was put together and that will
7 also be considered. We do have your sentencing minutes.

8 COMMISSIONER THOMPSON: Commissioners,
9 any other questions?

10 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Yeah. I have
11 a few questions. How old were you at the time of
12 the crime?

13 THE INMATE: 23, ma'am.

14 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: And how did
15 you meet your husband?

16 THE INMATE: I was a dancer.

17 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: What kind of
18 dancer?

19 THE INMATE: Oh, no. I was a
20 stripper. I'm going to be really specific. I was a
21 stripper. I made money in order to support my habit
22 and my lifestyle.

23 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: How did you
24 meet your husband?

25 THE INMATE: I was dancing.

1 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Where?

2 THE INMATE: And he was at a party, at
3 a household party. Yes, ma'am.

4 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: How long had
5 you known him before you had married him?

6 THE INMATE: Oh, not long. I would
7 say months.

8 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: And Mr.
9 Tommasi, who you described as your sex partner, how
10 long were you sleeping with Mr. Tommasi?

11 THE INMATE: Three weeks.

12 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: And how long
13 did you know him?

14 THE INMATE: I knew Tommasi years.

15 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: And how did
16 you know him?

17 THE INMATE: I met him at a party
18 years prior, but I did not know him, know him. I
19 just had really --

20 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Did he work
21 at any of the establishments that you worked at?

22 THE INMATE: No, no. Oh, no. He was
23 a biker; he was a friend of a friend.

24 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Okay.

25 THE INMATE: That's really it. It's

1 not really a big connection there.

2 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: So you were
3 married months, you were sleeping with Mr. Tommasi
4 for three weeks, did you realize that your husband
5 had a \$2 million life insurance policy and money in
6 the bank?

7 THE INMATE: No, ma'am, I did not.

8 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: You did not?

9 THE INMATE: Not when I married him,
10 no.

11 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Where did
12 your husband work?

13 THE INMATE: He was senior
14 vice-president of Grand Union supermarket.

15 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: You had no
16 idea that he had any money?

17 THE INMATE: At the time I did, yes.
18 No, not when I married him. At the time of his
19 death, I did, yes, and after this occurred, I
20 donated money to Students Against Drunk Driving and
21 Mothers Against Drunk Driving and signed off on this
22 before I took my plea. I signed off on that money.

23 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: So you want
24 us to believe that you were a victim of domestic
25 violence?

1 THE INMATE: Yes, ma'am, please. I do
2 want you to believe that greatly.

3 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: How long were
4 you married?

5 THE INMATE: A little over a year,
6 almost two years. We were together about two years.

7 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Okay. Did he
8 have any children?

9 THE INMATE: I was 21 to 23. No,
10 ma'am, no children.

11 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Where did
12 this take place?

13 THE INMATE: In Rockland County.

14 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: In Rockland
15 County?

16 THE INMATE: Yeah. I had gotten a
17 cottage behind the house in the woods, and I was
18 residing there for about a month because I ran.

19 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Was Mr.
20 Tommasi living there with you?

21 THE INMATE: Yes, ma'am. Yes. Mr.
22 Tommasi was more than a sex partner in my life; he
23 was safe. I felt safe that. I was found, I was
24 safe. I don't think I really thought very strongly
25 at all. I more acted and acted and acted, that's

1 all you really do when are you so embedded in drugs
2 and alcohol, you just act, you know. I didn't
3 really think.

4 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Some people
5 don't resort to what you resorted to, ma'am.

6 THE INMATE: Most people do not.

7 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: There's a lot
8 of people on drugs and alcohol. It's a tragic set
9 of circumstances. It doesn't sound like your
10 ex-husband had a chance, a very brutal, very brutal
11 murder.

12 THE INMATE: Yes, ma'am, it was.

13 COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
14 commissioner.

15 COMMISSIONER THOMPSON: Commissioner?

16 COMMISSIONER ELOVICH: No, thank you.

17 BY COMMISSIONER THOMPSON:

18 Q. All right. Thank you very much, Ms. Lennon. We'll
19 review your case and you'll hear from us in writing in a
20 couple of days.

21 A. Thank you. Thank you for hearing me.

22 (The inmate was excused.)

23 (After due deliberation by the Parole
24 Board panel, the following decision
25 was rendered:)

D E C I S I O N

Parole is denied. Hold to 24 months.

Next appearance 2-2016.

Parole is denied for the following reasons: After a careful review of your record and this interview, it is the determination of this panel that your release at this time is incompatible with the welfare and safety of the community.

This decision is based on the following factors: The heinous, brutal nature of the instant offense, Murder 2nd, involved you acting in concert, hitting the victim, your husband, with a bat several times, placing a plastic bag over his head and tying it with a phone cord. The body was then placed in a vehicle and driven to a secluded, wooded area where it was dumped. Your actions clearly displayed a propensity for extreme violence and a disregard for the sanctity of human life.

During interview, you expressed little remorse for the victim, stating you were a victim of domestic violence, which you stated you did not report to the authorities.

You have incurred a Tier III for assault on staff.

Your positive programming,

1 disciplinary history, risk to community,
2 rehabilitative efforts, needs for successful
3 reintegration, release plan, parole packet,
4 community support, opposition to your release,
5 sentencing minutes and required statutory factors
6 are also considered. However, discretionary release
7 is not appropriate at this time, as you placed your
8 own interests above those of society at large.

9
10 (All commissioners concur.)

11
12 C E R T I F I C A T I O N

13
14 I hereby certify that the proceedings and
15 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes
16 taken by me on the above cause and that this is a correct
17 transcript of the same to the best of my ability.

18
19
20 Christina M. Wolcott