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Board of Parole Hearings

ATTN: Pre-hearing correspondence

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May 22, 2019

RE: Inmate Raul Higgins, CDCR # P29949, subsequent lifer hearing

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Parole Panel:

I did not participate in the 2012 or 2014 Parole Hearings, but was contacted by the Decedents' children recently about their anxiety over this May 30<sup>th</sup> hearing. So, I appreciate the opportunity to address you. There is not a day that goes by that Mr. Higgins's murder of their mother, Carolyn Bolger, does not affect each of them deeply.

I have practiced law for over 35 years in New York and Hawaii Family Courts, mostly in child abuse cases. I represented Timothy Bolger in 2003 and 2006 in successful efforts to gain access to, and ultimately guardianship of his younger brother and sister, Steven and Megan. I got to know Tim, Robin and Tim's siblings during this time and we kept in touch over the years. They are upstanding, energetic and fair minded people. They struggle mightily to stay together as a family, after being split apart when their mother died.

Reading through the 9/26/12 and 6/6/14 transcripts, a couple of things stood out to me.

1. I've listened to many mental health experts testify that personality disorders are extremely hard to change, and efforts to do so require dedication on the patient's part in

intensive psychotherapy. Even then, such efforts are rarely successful because a personality disorder is at the core of our make-up.

As you know, Mr. Higgins' diagnosis at his first Risk Assessment, discussed at the 2014 hearing, was Borderline Personality Disorder with narcissistic features, and in his most recent Risk Assessment it changed slightly to Personality Disorder with narcissistic and borderline features. It is very unlikely that Mr. Higgins has been able to make basic changes.

As pointed out by Deputy Commissions Keith Stanton at the 2014 Parole Hearing, the 2014 Risk Assessment said Mr. Higgins "described himself as a markedly self-absorbed man who put his needs above all else and expected everyone in his path to follow suit," often resorting to violence. After the victim ended the relationship and when she failed to comply with his demands, Mr. Higgins' ego was insulted to the point that he flew into an extreme rage response. Whatever coping mechanisms he may have employed in the past were no longer effective, leaving him unable to suppress his retaliatory and murderous impulses. Further, his marked lack of empathy for anyone other than himself made it easier for him to overcome any internal inhibition not to kill. While Mr. Higgins has demonstrated good behavior control in prison, "future acts of violence will likely occur within the context of conflicted personal relationships in which he feels his ego is slighted or experiences a sense of abandonment." (Transcript 6/6/14, pp.75 – 76.)

Mr. Higgins is a violent, abusive man with women. (Tr. 6/6/14, pp. 93 – 94, lines 20 – 2). His Risk Assessment said he perpetrated violence against every person he's had a relationship with.

Demonstrating his Personality Disorder, at the 2014 Parole Hearing, Mr. Higgins said he thought about Mrs. Bolger's children finding her and "I didn't care." (Tr. 6/6/14, p. 96, line 3.) He had just dropped 7 year old Megan and 9 year old Steven at school, but didn't care what they found when they came home or what would happen to them.

How do you learn empathy?

2. This was not a crime of passion, but a carefully thought out murder, before and after. On the way to school before he murdered their mother, Mr. Higgins told Steven and Megan they wouldn't see much of him again.

He took care to lock all the doors when he left Carolyn Bolger on her bedroom floor so nobody could get find out. Even if someone were to have happened by, they would not be able to reach Carolyn.

Mr. Higgins could have made an anonymous 911 call from a public pay phone, which were common in the late 90s, to get help for Carolyn, but he didn't.

When he couldn't get what he wanted when he wanted it from Carolyn Bolger he killed her.

I respectfully request this Parole Board decide to keep Mr. Higgins in prison so he cannot continue to hurt the women with whom he is in relationship, and not take another mother away from her children. The risk to the community is too high. Thank you for the opportunity to address Mr. Higgins' parole status.

Sincerely,

Kimberly S. Towler, Esq.