

June 18, 2019

Board of Parole
Ms. Jennifer Shafer
San Quentin Prison

Re: Third Parole Consideration Hearing of Raul Higgins, CDC P29949
Taking place on May 30, 2019

Dear Ms. Jennifer Shafer and other Parole Board Members.

My name is Megan Bolger. I attended a parole hearing at San Quentin Prison on May 30, 2019 in the matter of the life term parole consideration of the inmate referenced above. I would like to discuss the grievances I have of the way the parole hearing was conducted by the two parole board members.

When I was seven (1991), the prisoner up for parole brutally strangled my mother and left her half dead on the floor, for her 16-year-old son to later find. While this man robbed me then of my innocence and the most important figure in my life, he continues to rob me every day since then of happy moments, of love and joy. Even my brightest days are shadowed by the lack of my mother and the reality of her murder.

It's been difficult to reach out to the Board after the hearing on May 30th. Besides dealing with the deep despair of the parole boards decision to release this murderer, I've struggled with the feelings of disrespect for the way the hearing was conducted and a complete hopelessness for our justice system. This hopelessness has me doubting the American justice system and those in power of determining what is just or not. This hopelessness reminds me that these words may fall on deaf ears.

But today's my mother's 60th birthday and in honor of her strength and beauty, I've found the strength to write to you. I ask the parole board to please review the transcripts of this hearing and make a new determination considering an analytical review of the transcripts and these additional factors.

1. The parole commissioners lack of compassion, understanding and respect for the gravity of the situation for the victims.
2. The parole commissioners lack of cross examination of the prisoner and "leading" him to answer the questions the way he wanted.
3. The inmates lack of consistency and inability to answer questions.

From the moment we entered the room, the Parole Commissioner was cracking jokes which were very unprofessional and insensitive. It seems he did not understand the severity of the situation for my family as victims. Did he review the several statements we submitted prior to this hearing? If he had just taken a look at those statements, or tuned into the looks on our faces, he should have understood that this was not a time to joke for us. Facing our mother's murderer is not a light happy experience no matter how many jokes you say. As a suggestion, please keep your jokes to yourself for it is a sign of disrespect and lack of sensitivity of the

situation. The parole commissioner continued to joke throughout the hearing, with the inmate himself and with the inmate's lawyer, like they were long-time friends.

Please take a closer look at the transcripts to see how the commissioner failed to question the inmate when there were obvious discrepancies in his story. A few to note- was he on drugs or not on drugs at the time of the crime? If so, how much? Also, I pointed out in the hearing that the inmate said he would, "tell a love interest after two years of dating that he would admit to murdering his former girlfriend." This was passed over during the commissioner's examination and when brought up by me, I was told that the prisoner was confused by the question. This all should be available in the transcripts.

While the victims were speaking, the commissioner was typing on his computer- his summary report of his recommendation to release the prisoner. While the female parole board member had her eyes closed and looked to be sleeping. This is vastly different from the second parole hearing we attended. Why are some parole members respectful and listening to the victims, while others at different prisons are not? I think the parole board commissioner's actions show an overall lack of investment and commitment in understanding the true details and nature of the case which led to a poor decision.

I understand that the parole board bases their decision off the inmates current behaviors- not his past crime. But I also feel the parole commissioners had already made up their mind to release this prisoner before they had done their duty to examine him.

I ask the board to please not let this happen to other victim's families- for the experience is already hard enough.

I ask the board to please reexamine the transcripts and take a closer look at this case. This isn't just an average murder case, it's very unique.

I ask the parole board to remember why they are in the positions they are in. If not to help others and do the most good, then what for?

Thank you,

Megan Bolger