



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: RAMOS, Joel  
DOC #: 712229  
FACILITY: Airway Heights Correctional Center  
TYPE OF HEARING: LTJUVBRD Hearing  
HEARING DATE: July 25, 2017  
PANEL MEMBERS: LRG & JP  
FINAL DECISION DATE: August 14, 2017

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This matter came before Lori Ramsdell-Gilkey and Jeff Patnode, 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 9.94A.730. Mr. Ramos appeared in person and was represented by Attorney Nancy Collins. Testimony was provided by Department of Corrections (DOC) Classification Counselor (CC) Jeffrey Rude, and Mr. Ramos.

**BOARD DECISION:**

Based on the burden of proof set out in RCW 9.94A.730(3) and the totality of evidence and information provided to the Board, the Board does find by a preponderance of the evidence that Mr. Ramos is more likely than not to commit any new criminal law violations if released on conditions. Consequently, the Board finds Mr. Ramos not releasable and recommends he submit a petition to the Board for another hearing in August 2022.

**NEXT ACTION:**

The Board recommends Mr. Ramos submit a petition for another hearing in August 2022.

**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. Joel Ramos' re-petition was submitted in May of 2016 and accepted, which resulted in his hearing on this date.

Mr. Ramos entered into a plea bargain and agreed to plead guilty to the four murders with the understanding a sentence of 20 years per count would be recommended. He was convicted on August 23, 1993, in Yakima County; Cause #93-1-01281-6 for Count I – Murder in the First Degree (premeditated) and Counts II, III, and IV for Murder in the First Degree (Felony). His time start was September 3, 1993. The minimum terms were set at 240 months on Counts I - IV from a Sentencing Reform Act (SRA) range of 240 to 320 months on each Count. The sentence on each Count was to be served **consecutively**, for a total of **960** months.

He was subject to a resentencing hearing and on October 15, 2013, the Court resentenced Mr. Ramos to a term of 300 months (an increase of five years) on Count I and 240 months each on Counts II – IV to be served consecutively, for a **total of 1,020** months. Mr. Ramos has served approximately 286 months in prison and 152 days in jail.

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

According to file material, Joel Ramos (age 14) and a friend/co-defendant (age 14) went to the home of a boy they knew from school. There is conflicting information about the reason they went to this home and differing stories from the co-defendants as to culpability for each murder. However, it appears that upon entering the home the adult male, who had physical issues and reportedly walked with a cane, was confronted in the living room area. He was beaten and stabbed multiple times, apparently by both co-defendants. Then the mother, who had been showering, was attacked and stabbed up to 50 times and left for dead in the bathtub. The 12 year old son who had run into the bathroom was then killed. Finally, a six year old little boy, in

his bed with a blanket pulled over him, was stabbed and bludgeoned in the head, fracturing his skull. The family was discovered the next day when a neighbor boy walked over to see why the boys had not been in school that day.

**PRIOR CRIMINAL CONDUCT:**

Mr. Ramos has no other known criminal convictions.

**HISTORY/COMMENTS:**

Mr. Ramos' last hearing was held on February 24, 2015. At that time the Board found him not releasable and indicated he could re-petition the Board in May of 2016. They recommended that he continue to address his risk to violence through continued offender change programming that might include Thinking for a Change and other cognitive-behavioral programs that were available. They also requested that a new Psychological Evaluation be completed prior to Mr. Ramos' next hearing.

CC Jeffrey Rude stated Mr. Ramos has been doing well on the unit. He is respectful and gets along with others. He has completed a good deal of training and education to include Makin' It Work, Thinking for a Change, Life Skills, Job Seeking, Redemption and the Redemption Facilitators class. He is not currently working as he has been focused on programming. His last serious infraction was in 2008 and his last minor infraction was in 2015. Ms. Collins mentioned that Mr. Ramos has also been participating in Toast Masters. She provided the Board with copies of several certificates he has received.

Mr. Ramos was asked to tell the Board about the offenses for which he is currently serving time. He stated he and his co-defendant were hanging out at his house using drugs and drinking and they came up with the idea to go beat up the father of a boy who went to their school. The plan was for the co-defendant to enter through the backdoor and Mr. Ramos to enter through the front door.

On the way to the door, Mr. Ramos stepped into a hole and fell down. His codefendant went on into the house. By the time Mr. Ramos got back up and entered the house, his co-defendant and the man were already fighting. The 12 year old son entered the room and yelled, "Don't kill my father." The father had something in his hand that he thought was a gun, so Mr. Ramos ran out the front door and jumped over a fence. He lay in the yard for a while. His friend called to him, so he returned to the house.

When he entered, his co-defendant was throwing stuff at the adult male and the man had a big stick. Mr. Ramos joined in and began throwing small logs at the man. One of them hit the man and he fell to the ground and blood began pouring out of his back. He apparently had a lot of stab wounds in his back. Mr. Ramos said he never saw the man get stabbed. He ran out of the house again.

His codefendant had gone into the six year old boy's room and called out to Mr. Ramos. He went back in the house and saw that his co-defendant had stabbed the boy. Mr. Ramos then hit the boy with a log two or three times. Mr. Ramos then again went outside. His codefendant started taking items so he did too.

The Board asked Mr. Ramos when the 12 year old and the mother died. He said he did not know, that it must have happened while he was outside.

After first starting his incarceration in an adult IMU he was later transferred to Maple Lane until he reached the age of 18. Mr. Ramos stated that his time at Maple Lane was very good for him and his mom and he received a good deal of counselling.

The Board asked him what would be the most difficult issues he would deal with if released. He said he looks forward to everyday issues like paying bills, etc.

Mr. Ramos has support in the community and family and friends who are willing to allow him to

reside with them. He would prefer to release to King County if released. There are courses in local community colleges there he would like to attend in hopes of becoming a paralegal. He is also interested in being a translator for Spanish speaking persons.

**INFORMATION CONSIDERED:**

In preparation for Mr. Ramos' hearing and its decision in this case, the Board completed a review of his ISRB file. The Board considered all information contained in that file, including but not limited to: Information provided by the sentencing court/prosecutor; the most recent DOC facility plan; information regarding institutional behavior and programming; any letters of support and/or concerns sent to the Board; the Decline Hearing Report; the Defendant's Memorandum regarding resentencing; the Transcript from the Sentencing Modification Hearing dated October 15, 2013; and the Memorandum in Support of Release. The Board also considered the testimony of the witnesses.

In addition, the Board considered the letter submitted by the Yakima County Prosecutor. Mr. Brusic strongly urged the Board to deny release for Mr. Ramos. He stated, "Simply put, Mr. Ramos, in the opinion of this office and of this community, has hardly even begun to serve his punishment for his evil extinguishment of the Skelton family. Any release short of his sentence is an injustice of incomprehensible magnitude."

**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 9.94A.730 (3) the Board finds Mr. Ramos is not releasable.

In a somewhat unusual move, the Court resentenced Mr. Ramos in 2013 and **increased** his sentence by five years. He was sentenced to a total of 1,020 months and has served just over

one quarter of that at 286 months. The Court clearly outlined the reasoning for the sentence and indicated the issues in Miller v Alabama were considered prior to the imposition of the sentence. Mr. Ramos is culpable for the deaths of four persons, one a six year old boy whose skull he fractured. He admits himself he could have made different decisions the night of the offenses. He failed to do so, and as a result an entire family is dead. It is too much of a reach to believe he is not more likely than not to commit another offense if released at this time. The Board believes the safety of the community is paramount in our decisions and we believe the community needs to be protected from Mr. Ramos.

LRG:jas

August 10, 2017

August 15, 2017

August 22, 2017

cc: Institution  
Joel Ramos  
File



STATE OF WASHINGTON

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
INDETERMINATE SENTENCE REVIEW BOARD**

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

DATE: August 10, 2017

TO: Full Board

FROM: LRG & JP (Jody)

RE: RAMOS, Joel/*DOC# 712229*

Panel recommends: Find Mr. Ramos not releasable.

Next action: Re-petition the Board in August 2022.

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Lori Ramsdell-Gilkey 8-14-2017 Jeff Patnode 8-14-2017 Elyse Balmert 8-14-2017 Kecia Rongen 8-14-2017	