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May 15, 2018

Board of Parole Hearings
Attn: Nonviolent Parole Review Process
P.O. Box 4036
Sacramento, CA 95812-4036

**Re: Inmate John Lee Hunter; CDCR T62183
Ventura County Superior Court Case 2008024298
Opposition Letter Due to Board of Parole Hearings May 16, 2018**

Dear Board Members:

This letter is written to recommend denial of early parole for inmate John Lee Hunter. On January 9, 2009, the inmate was sentenced to 15 years in prison, with just under a year of credit. Releasing the inmate now means he would serve about 60 percent of his actual sentence. This recommendation to deny early release is based upon:

- 1) The inmate's commitment offense.
- 2) The inmate's significant criminal history.
- 3) The unreasonable risk of violence to the community if the inmate is released early.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMMITMENT OFFENSE

On May 15, 2008, officers were dispatched to St. John's Medical Center in Oxnard regarding a victim of domestic violence. When officers arrived, victim Shonnise Mitchell was being treated in the emergency room. She told officers that earlier that day she had arranged with the inmate, her boyfriend of one year, to go to his residence. He was not home at the time but told her to go in and stay in his room. She went into the inmate's room and fell asleep. She was awakened by a loud knocking on the bedroom door. She opened the bedroom door and was confronted by the inmate, who was visibly angry. He asked her why she locked the door, then pushed her onto a nearby couch. He demanded to know what she was doing in his room and punched her in the face with a closed fist. She told him that she needed to go to the bathroom and got up to go toward the door, but the

Board of Parole Hearings
Re: John Lee Hunter, CDCR T62183
May 15, 2018
Page 2

inmate pushed her onto the couch again. She finally went to the bathroom, but when she exited the bathroom, the inmate punched her in the face several times with a closed fist. Ms. Mitchell fled the residence and phoned her sister and father for help.

Ms. Mitchell's sister and father immediately responded. They saw her injuries and called an ambulance. She was transported to the emergency room where officers found her visibly shaken, crying, and noticed the right side of her face was swollen.

Ms. Mitchell also told the officers that the inmate had placed a kitchen knife to her throat during the attack, and told her that if he wanted to, he could kill her. Additionally, she told the officers that approximately two weeks prior, the inmate had punched her in the face, resulting in a fractured tooth which she had to have removed. After the incident, she obtained an emergency protective order.

According to medical records, the victim was struck on her cheeks and jaw. Her left cheek and eye were swollen and bruised. She complained of pain in her arms from being grabbed. She also suffered bruising on her right lower arm and right leg.

After a jury convicted the inmate, he was interviewed by probation for sentencing. The inmate claimed he did not hit the victim and knock her tooth out. Instead, he said they were "wrestling around." Regarding the May 15 incident, he felt he was innocent of assault with a deadly weapon, although he said he hit her. He stated he deserves to be punished for hitting her, but not for using a weapon.

The inmate was convicted of two counts of felony assault with deadly force likely to produce great bodily injury, and one count of simple assault. The court found true a strike prior, a serious felony prior, and two prison priors. The court sentenced him to 15 years in prison, refusing to strike his prior strike offense.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

The inmate's criminal history began as a juvenile at the age of 13. As a juvenile he participated in a robbery, battery, vehicle burglary, and providing false information to police officers.

As an adult, the inmate escalated his criminal activity to armed robbery, violently resisting arrest, burglary, lying to police, and drug crimes. During an armed robbery, which resulted in a conviction in 2001 in Santa Barbara Superior Court, the inmate discharged a firearm.

Board of Parole Hearings
Re: John Lee Hunter, CDCR T62183
May 15, 2018
Page 3

Also, the inmate developed an alarming proclivity for extreme violence against women. In 2004, the inmate grabbed his female victim by her neck and strangled her. He then forced her from her home and dragged her to his van and hit her with a closed fist. He struck her 10 to 15 times with his fists, and with a metal handgun magazine. At one point during the assault, the inmate asked the victim to kiss him and when she turned her head to comply, he punched her in the head with a closed fist. During the assault, the inmate also told the victim he would kill her. This victim bravely testified against the inmate at the trial for his commitment offense against Ms. Mitchell.

DISCUSSION

Granting early parole of the inmate poses a safety risk to the community. Based on his commitment offense, criminal history, and demonstrated refusal to comply with the conditions of probation and parole, the inmate should not be released early from prison. The inmate makes decisions that result in the violent victimization of others, especially women. Based on the inmate's unwillingness to change his behavior despite multiple incarcerations and grants of probation and parole, and based on his escalating violence against woman, he will commit crimes of violence when released. Moreover, the inmate's inability to admit the seriousness of his crimes, or that he committed the crimes at all, shows he is a danger to our community.

The inmate has shown a disregard for the law through his life. He is unable to refrain from engaging in violent, dangerous criminal conduct. He should serve his full term.

CONCLUSION

The inmate poses an unreasonable risk of violence to the community if granted early parole. I respectfully request the Board deny early parole for the inmate.

Very truly yours,



GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

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