

Multiple High-Profile Inmates Among 11 Granted Parole by VI Board

Among the recently paroled are individuals convicted of manslaughter, murder, and gun-related crimes

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Of the 24 parole applications that came before the Virgin Islands Parole Board in December 2023, 11 have been granted, according to a release issued by the board. Additionally, three applicants decided not to appear before the board and 10 were judged not to have been sufficiently rehabilitated and were denied parole at this time.

The recently paroled include those serving time for causing the deaths of others: Julius Viera, Carlos Acosta, Edgar Ortiz-Carmona, and Kaleb Lopez Josue. Viera was found guilty of several felonies including voluntary manslaughter after a 2013 shooting incident on Market Street in Christiansted left Ronald Coulon dead and two others wounded. Acosta, Ortiz-Carmona, and Josue,

meanwhile, were serving time for the 2008 killing of Dwayne Lynch on St. Thomas. Lester Roberts had been convicted of voluntary manslaughter and attempted murder.

Others who gained parole in December had been previously convicted of gun crimes including illegal firearm possession and unauthorized discharge of a firearm within 1000 feet of a school: Quanza Heath, Callistus Etienne and Johverne Meyers.

The remaining two parolees, Winston Georges and Thierre Louis, were serving time for domestic violence convictions – aggravated rape and third-degree assault respectively.

Jahzeel Fenton, serving 20 years for shooting his girlfriend in 2010 when she broke up with him, was recommended for continuing rehabilitation and denied parole. The shooting, which occurred in front of the woman's young children, resulted in the amputation of both of her legs and forced her onto lifelong dialysis due to the damage to her body. Sentenced following a plea agreement in 2017, Fenton lost an appeal the following year. He was 17 at the time of the shooting.

Jalani Williams, imprisoned for life after 25-year old Almonzo Williams was left dead and two others injured in a 2009 shooting on St. Croix, was also denied parole. Williams was 16 at the time of his shooting, and his initial sentence of life without the possibility of parole was overturned as unconstitutional due to his age.

Mekel Blash, serving 15 years for second-degree murder in the 2014 killing of James Malfetti Jr; Daniel Castillo, serving time for involuntary manslaughter and child abuse in the 2007 death of 12 year old Laquina Hennis; and Edwin Encarnacion, convicted of voluntary manslaughter and second-degree murder in the 2010 killings of Jorge Parilla and David Martin, were also denied parole.

Similarly, Allen Samuel, Louie Vaccaro, Jaydee Brathwaite, Jackoy Mulraine, serving time for assault, aggravated assault, first-degree assault with intent to commit rape, and failure to register a firearm respectively, were judged in need of continuing rehabilitation and denied parole.

Yamini Potter will also remain incarcerated for the time being. Potter is currently serving sentences for federal and local offenses related to fraud and theft. He allegedly tried to duck out of hotel room charges by claiming to be the son of former Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter, who has denied any kinship whatsoever with the offender.

The three applicants who did not appear were Christopher Sylvester, Jahkeel Clarke and Khaeil Thompson.