

To: Mr. Jorge Montes - Chairman of the Parole Board:

The recent decision by the Parole Board to parole and release two murderers, John Outlaw and Frederick Thomas, whose extremely violent crimes of a double homicide and murder/rape is a disgrace to the people of Illinois and the justice system.

Your cold and heartless form letter notice to my family simply stating that John Outlaw, who brutally murdered my father, is to be released with no further explanation was extremely disrespectful and an insult to any victims of crime in this state. Your parole board provided no prior notification of the parole board hearings and did not provide any request for input from the victim's family for this critically important decision that could put others lives at risk. How can the parole board let these two men out of prison without input from all possible areas, including the victim's families prior to making this decision?

John Outlaw brutally murdered my father, ... He was waiting for the front door guard, Lawrence O'Conner, to get a cup of coffee before he was to leave work Friday afternoon, January 23, 1976. He never had a chance to leave. John Outlaw, who worked there with them, was waiting in hiding to kill them and steal fur coats from the warehouse where they worked. He knew them and brutally killed them by striking them from behind. This was premeditated murder. He valued the fur coats more than the lives of two hard working men. Thank God for the guard in the back of the building who called the police who later caught John Outlaw with my father's wallet and the blood of both victims on his clothing.

My family and the family of Lawrence O'Conner were grateful he was caught and given multiple sentences of 300 years for murder, 50 years for armed robbery and 20 years for burglary so he could never walk the streets and kill again. Now, 31 years later and serving less than 8% of his term, you and the Illinois parole board have released him due to "good behavior" while in prison.

Frederick Thomas brutally raped and murdered Irma Jean Williams on May 9, 1974. Frederick Thomas had been on parole after having been convicted of rape when he invited Miss Williams to a party. Instead of taking her to a party, Frederick Thomas took her to an abandoned building where he tied her up, gagged her then brutally raped her and stabbed her 24 times. The judge sentenced him to 75 to 150 years in prison. He too has been paroled by your Illinois parole board due to his "good behavior" while in prison.

The victim's families have a direct message for you, Mr. Montes, and the parole board:

You have failed the police who put their lives on the line to arrest these two men. You have failed the prosecutors who prosecuted them to the full extent of the law. You have failed the jury who found these murderers guilty of these hideous crimes. You have failed the judges who sentenced these men to a prison term that was intended to keep them in prison for life.

You have also failed the spirit of the victims whose lives were taken from them. You have failed the friends and communities of these victims who knew their kindness and friendship. You have failed the families of the victims who feel the loss of their loved one every day of their lives. You have failed the people of the state of Illinois who want to live their lives in peace and in the comfort of knowing that violent criminals of this nature are in prison for life. You have let the criminals go and sentenced the victim's families.

The State Attorney of Cook County, Dick Devine is also outraged at this decision. If John Outlaw and Frederick Thomas were prosecuted today under current laws they would be, at a minimum, in prison for life. How could you and the parole board let these men walk the street again? Would you allow these murderers to be near your loved ones? How many more murders have to be committed by paroled inmates before we stop this madness?

We demand you and the parole board reverse this decision now. We will call on the Legislators to right this wrong by making sure laws are in place to prevent such travesties and that you all take whatever action is necessary to assure us these two criminals are back in prison where they belong. We will call upon the legislature to assure the people of Illinois that there are no more "loop holes" for violent criminals to pass through to get an early release. We ask for justice as you would ask for justice for your family.

[The victim's] Family