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April 28, 2023

Lisa Hoying, Chair  
Ohio Parole Board  
4545 Fisher Road, Suite D  
Columbus, Ohio 43328

Re: Parole hearing for Charles Price  
Inmate Number A213438

Dear Chair Hoying:

I write in opposition to the parole release of Charles Price for the 1989 murder of Paula Price. This office and the surviving members of Ms. Price's family continue to oppose his release from prison.

On February 3, 1989, Charles "Dale" Price armed himself with a 5-shot revolver and traveled to Union County to kill his 37-year-old estranged wife<sup>1</sup> Paula Price at her place of employment – the county nursing home. Price shot the woman multiple times and fled the State of Ohio. The State opposes Inmate Price being granted parole for the following reasons:

**I. THE MURDER WAS PREMEDITATED**

At 12:07 hours on February 3, 1989, the Union County Sheriff's Office received a call from the Marion County Sheriff's Office reporting that "Charles Price was armed with a .38 caliber revolver and was going to shoot his ex-wife Paula." Deputies from

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<sup>1</sup> The Inmate and victim reportedly married only a few months earlier in November 1988.



both departments tried to locate Price without result. Price was reported to be driving a green van.

On February 2, 1989, the night before the murder, Price stole \$2,200 from his employer, Thorton's gas station in Marion. On February 3, 1989, just hours before the murder, Inmate Price used the stolen money to buy a used 1975 Cadillac Coupe Deville for \$1275.00 at a car lot in Marion. The dealer reported that Inmate Price was waiting for him at the car lot when he arrived to open that morning. Price used this car to travel to Marysville to complete the murder.

Inmate Price left his green van parked at the dealership, reporting he would return to pick it up. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that Inmate Price wanted a vehicle not associated with him to aid his flight following the murder.

After leaving the car lot, Inmate Price went to a pawn shop in Marion to redeem a handgun. He then drove to Marysville to the Union Manor Nursing home where his wife was employed.

Price reportedly wore a three-quarter length coat when he came into the home, keeping a hand in his pocket. Witnesses at the nursing home reported asking Price to leave the facility after he arrived, telling him he was not allowed there. Price did not. Instead, Inmate Price reportedly confronted Paula, trying to get her to go outside with him, to which she replied, "Do you think I'm crazy?"

Inmate Price drew the revolver from his pocket and shot Paula Price in the back as Paula turned to leave. Then – after she fell to the ground – the inmate stood over the victim shooting her multiple more times killing her. The autopsy conducted on the victim showed five (5) bullet entrance wounds and three (3) exit wounds.<sup>2</sup> Because the revolver used by Inmate Price was reported to be a 5-shot revolver, it follows that Inmate Price emptied his gun into the dying woman. This shows the extreme malice the Inmate had in committing the murder.

Facility nurses attempted CPR and artificial respiration until paramedics arrived. Paula was transported to Union County Memorial Hospital where she died of her gunshot wounds.

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<sup>2</sup> Two bullets were recovered from her body. The autopsy report revealed eight gunshot wounds – to the right chest, upper leg anteriorly, right knee, right midback, right upper back, head near the right ear, right back of hand, and mid chest.

Inmate Price was initially charged with aggravated murder with a gun specification. On the eve of the trial, Price pleaded guilty to murder with a gun spec. Reports indicate the plea was reached because Price first claimed to be not guilty by reason of insanity. However, the facts show Price's conduct was calculated and carefully executed. His flight following the murder showed his understanding of the wrongfulness of his conduct.

## II. THE INMATE STALKED AND TERRORIZED THE VICTIM PRIOR TO HER MURDER

About 3 to 4 weeks before she was shot to death, Paula Price was so frightened by Inmate Price she left her home to live with her sister. Ms. Price's sister found the victim a place to live with members of her husband's family. Those family members attested to the fear that Inmate Price caused his estranged wife.

Paula Price was so frightened of Inmate Price that she moved to Bucyrus to avoid him, driving to Marysville to work each day.

Witnesses reported seeing Inmate Price at a bar in Bucyrus on February 2, 1989, at which time Inmate Price "was ready to party." Inmate Price asked the witness to take him to Jump Street in Bucyrus – a location the witness knew Paula Price had lived. Inmate Price reportedly plied her with alcohol to get her to reveal Paula's address, which she refused to do. The witness reported Inmate Price said he "wanted to take care of business," and later saw him with a handgun. The witness suggested Paula was having an affair, making it clear if he could not have her, "nobody else will."

## III. THE INMATE SHOWED NO REMORSE FOLLOWING THE KILLING

The inmate showed no remorse for killing his wife, writing a letter blaming the victim, "I just went off the deep end as they say. I went to talk to her and she wouldn't even talk to me. I just couldn't stand it any longer. \* \* \*I don't care what they do to me now you see, I have already been dead for a while, Paula killed me a little at a time. \* \* \* The sooner I die the sooner I'll get to see my baby again in hell." /s/ Dale.

Detectives who interviewed Price after his arrest reported Price said, "he was attempting to block the incident out of his mind." Price told detectives he decided to "go to New Orleans, Louisiana. Chillingly, Price said that he called the funeral home and stopped in Gulfport, Mississippi to send flowers to the funeral home.<sup>3</sup>" Inmate Price

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<sup>3</sup> Report of Sheriff's Detective Lonnie Elmore.

told a Florida investigator he used an alias, “Dale Jordan,” to send the flowers<sup>4</sup>. In a letter dated July 9, 2000 to the Parole Board<sup>5</sup> a witness wrote, “What seemed so unbelievable was that Dale not only killed [Paula] in cold blood – but he sent a dozen roses to her at the funeral home.” She reported that “He attached a note “I will love you forever and ever. Amen.” This, she said, was one of Paula’s favorite songs. “We were devastated to think that he could do what he did and then send her flowers.”

News accounts of the Inmate Price’s plea hearing during trial indicate he, “sat impassively” as the prosecutor explained the reason for the plea agreement to the Court. When the judge asked Inmate Price why he changed his plea, Price responded “the lesser charge meant eligibility for parole in fewer years and that he simply wanted to put the incident behind him.” Price told the court, “This whole thing has been like a nightmare \* \* \*I just want to get it over with<sup>6</sup>.”

Then county prosecutor R. Larry Schneider approved the plea, noting that he did not expect parole to be granted.<sup>7</sup>

Inmate Price showed no remorse at the time of his plea – he did not express regret nor was he reported to have apologized to the victim’s family members. His attitude toward the murder is completely devoid of any sense of shame or remorse.

#### IV. THE INMATE FLED OHIO TO GO TO MARDI GRAS

Following the murder the inmate fled the State and a federal fugitive warrant had to be issued for his arrest. Price’s letter shows where he may have gone. Price wrote, “I’m going to turn myself in soon. There’s no reason for me to keep going. I always wanted to see the Mardi Gras.” Records indicate the 1989 Mardi Gras in New Orleans began on February 7, 1989<sup>8</sup>. If Inmate Price’s letter was true, Price traveled to party at the festival following the murder. Price later told Detectives he “went to New Orleans and the Mardi Gras was going on and the weather was bad. He then decided to go to Florida<sup>9</sup>.”

Inmate Price was located and arrested in Citrus County, Florida on February 7 driving the Cadillac and extradited from that state to Ohio to stand trial.

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<sup>4</sup> Citrus County Sheriff’s Office Report dated 02-07-1989.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Nancy J. Jamison, dated July 9, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Marysville Journal Tribune, Price Pleads Guilty to Murder Charge (Aug. 14, 1989)

<sup>7</sup> *Id* at p. 2

<sup>8</sup> <http://nutrias.org/facts/mgdates.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Report of Sheriff’s Detective Lonnie Elmore

## V. THE INMATE REPRESENTS A CONTINUED RISK TO SOCIETY IF RELEASED

The ISR shows the Inmate is a moderate risk using the Static Tool ST. The report does not show what factors create the risk – but there is a risk to the public if Price is released.

## VI. THE INMATE DECLINED VICTIM AWARENESS, SHOWING A CONTINUING LACK OF REMORSE

Offered a recommended victim awareness program in 2004, the inmate declined the programming. Not until 2023, when the inmate is up for parole does his ISR show he is now “wait-listed” for the program. This refusal shows a continued disregard by the inmate toward the impact the murder had on Ms. Price’s family and others. The ISR provided by ODRC shows no pro-social activities or group participation – if the inmate participated, he did not agree to release this information. The ISR shows no incentives issued for positive behavior. Prices’ 2001 ISR shows no programs were completed.

## VII. PRICE SPURIOUSLY CLAIMED HE WAS NOT GUILTY BY REASON OF INSANITY

Lacking any other defense, Inmate Price asserted he was Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity to escape responsibility for the murder. Court and State experts disputed the claim of insanity, finding Inmate Price was “not suffering from a mental disease or defect” and the evidence does “not support the hypothesis that (Inmate) Price was not responsible\*\*\*.”<sup>10</sup> The careful planning of this murder and flight afterward show the defense was false.

## VIII. THE MURDER AFFECTED WITNESSES TO THE SHOOTING AND THE VICTIM’S FAMILY

Inmate Price shot Paula Price to death in front of witnesses. One witness wrote, that following the murder, “we hid in the bushes, then we crawled along a row of bushes to another entrance to the building. People told us he had left. Mary locked herself in one of the bathrooms and was throwing up. \* \* \*It was like a war zone. \* \* \* Mary and I went to the hospital for counseling.”<sup>11</sup> Ms. Price continued, “I suffered from nightmares for years. One day in church the kids were busting balloons in the basement and I hit the

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<sup>10</sup> Netcare Report dated April 28, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Vickie Price to the Ohio Parole Board, 2008 hearing.

floor thinking it was a gun shot. \* \* \*I am an eyewitness to this terrible crime and I will never forget it, nor should it be forgotten by you. Dale should not be allowed to forget it and continue his life as a free person.\* \* \* We can't set ourselves free. ”

Another wrote, “I spent the rest of the day [after the murder] calming and counseling the [nursing home] residents. \*\*\* Those that could understand what happened were crying and shaking with fear. \*\*\* This was reflected in their behavior, loss of appetite, and sleep listlessness.\* \* \* Every time we passed the place where Paula had been killed we shuddered. We relived in nightmares the shots, screams, terror, and blood.”<sup>12</sup>

Ms. Price's sister wrote, “I think about Paula every day. \*\*\* She left an 11-year-old daughter \*\*\* who misses her mother. She left 2 daughters who now have children of their own who will never know their grandmother.”<sup>13</sup> Two of Paula's sisters were employed by and present at the nursing home at the time of her murder.

Nancy Jeffers wrote in 2011, “I still have nightmares about the look he gave me when I ran to the scene to see if any residents were hurt or emotionally traumatized. \* \* \* As a social worker for the facility, I had to relive the scene many times in trying to relieve the fear and anxiety of the residents.”<sup>14</sup>

Family member Ruby Gale Erwin wrote, “My family still lives that day over and over again. \* \* \* I feel that by releasing him would endanger my family and other member of our community.”<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Inmate Charles Dale Price planned the execution-style murder of his estranged 37-year-old wife and did so in the presence of many witnesses and with family members nearby. He then fled after killing his wife to party at Mardi Gras. He taunted the family and the deceased woman by sending flowers to the funeral referencing her favorite song. His attitude toward the murder was callous and dismissive – only wanting to put it out of his mind and behind him. Price has apparently done nothing while in prison other than engage in some work activity, refusing victim awareness training when offered.

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<sup>12</sup> Letter to the Parole Board, dated September 4, 1997.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to the Parole Board from Mary Tanner, March 25, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Letter of Nancy Jeffers to the Parole Board, Nov. 7, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Letter of Ruby Gale Erwin to the Parole Board, Sept. 30, 1997.

Because of the nature of this crime, Charles Dale Price does not deserve parole. The factors of the offense outlined above greatly outweigh the inmate's rehabilitative efforts – which, to the State, seem to be non-existent. Inmate Price's utter lack of remorse and callousness toward the cold-blooded murder shown by his trip to party at Mardi Gras following Paula Price's death, coupled with the taunting of the family in sending flowers to the woman's funeral evidence a cold and cruel mind – and a continued danger to society if released.

Respectfully yours,

David W. Phillips  
Union County Prosecuting Attorney