



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Lawmakers Call on NYS Board of Parole to Deny Release of Herman Bell

JIM RANNEY January 30, 2018

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) joined Legislature colleagues and representatives of various law enforcement agencies in calling on the New York State Board of Parole to deny the release from prison of Herman Bell, one of three men convicted in the 1971 murder of two New York City police officers.

Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones were lured to a Harlem housing project by a

bogus 911 call on May 21, 1971 where they were ambushed, shot and killed. Officer Jones died instantly from a gunshot to the head. Officer Piagentini, who begged for his life, was shot 22 times by the suspects and died on his way to the hospital.

Bell, Anthony Bottom and Albert Washington were convicted of the two murders and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison in 1979. A parole hearing for Bell is scheduled for next month, his seventh since 2004. Bottom has a parole hearing set for June. Washington died in prison.

Senator Martin Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn), a retired NYPD officer, and Senator Fred Akshar (R-C-I, Colesville), former Broome County Undersheriff, joined Gallivan, a former NYS Trooper, Sheriff of Erie County and member of the NYS Board of Parole. They urged concerned residents to sign an online petition calling on the Board of Parole to deny Bell's release. The petition is available at <http://www.noparoleforhermanbell.com/>

"This was an especially heinous crime and the release of Herman Bell would be an affront to all law abiding citizens," Gallivan said. "An attack on a police officer is an attack on a community. Such disregard for the rule of law shows an incompatibility with the welfare of society. His release from jail would minimize the lives of law enforcement officers everywhere who have dedicated their lives to keeping our communities safe."

"For the seventh time since 2004, cop-killer Herman Bell will ask the NYS Parole Board for compassion and set him free," Golden said. "However, Bell showed no mercy when he brutally murdered Police Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones after luring them to a Harlem housing project with a fake 911 call back in 1971. Releasing Herman Bell would minimize his violent and heinous actions. Additionally, it would serve as an injustice to the

memory of the brave officers and an insult to their grieving families. I encourage everyone to sign the petition to keep Herman Bell behind bars for the rest of his life.”

“Herman Bell helped lure, ambush and sadistically murder two public servants simply because of the police uniforms they wore,” Akshar said. “That kind of evil has no place in our society and I strongly urge the parole board to keep Mr. Bell behind bars where he belongs. Officer Waverly Jones, Officer Joseph Piagentini and their families were forever denied living the rest of their lives together. It seems more than fair that Mr. Bell live the rest of his life in prison.”

The petition effort also has the support of many law enforcement agencies and organizations.

NYC PBA President Patrick J. Lynch said: “Herman Bell and his two murdering colleagues laid in wait for any two police officers to respond to a phony call for help with the intent of murdering them. That kind of evil cannot be rehabilitated. Had Bell been convicted of the same crime today, he would have been sentenced to life without the chance of parole which was not an option when he was convicted. Herman Bell continues to be a danger in prison and should never be released to threaten the good people of New York again.”

New York State Troopers PBA President Thomas H. Mungeer said: “The New York State Troopers Police Benevolent Association opposes parole for Herman Bell, who was involved in the savage killings of Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones in 1971. Bell’s actions show that he has no respect for the criminal justice system, and given the appalling trend of law enforcement officers being targeted, we believe there would be a strong likelihood of Bell committing such a heinous crime again. The Troopers PBA is proactively involved in trying

to keep those who murdered police officers behind bars, and we are proud to assist the New York City PBA in this effort.”

Christopher M. Quick, President NYS Police Investigators Association said: “Police Officers are peacekeepers. As peacekeepers, they are held to the highest standard in society and their lives must be regarded as sacrosanct. To grant freedom to someone who mercilessly slaughters police officers undermines everything that these peacekeepers stand for and represent. Officers Waverly Jones and Joseph Piagentini gave the ultimate sacrifice when they were brutally murdered at the hands of Herman Bell and his accomplices. Officer Waverly was executed by a single shot to the back of his head. Officer Piagentini was brutally shot 22 times as he begged for his life and tried to escape. The sad truth is that they were murdered because they were police officers. To even entertain the thought of parole for this murderer, who viciously took the lives of these two peacekeepers, would erode the very foundation of the peaceful society that police officers strive to provide the public on a daily basis. A perspicuous message must be conveyed that if you kill a police officer your privilege to live free in society is gone forever.”

Police Benevolent Association of NYS President Peter Barry said: “The facts of this horrible crime, specifically shooting and killing police officers, one of them with his own gun as he begged for his life, make me shudder. For the families of Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones, who lost so much and suffered for decades, justice should not be removed and parole for Herman Bell should absolutely be denied.”

Council 82, AFSCME, AFL-CIO said: “Council 82, AFSCME, AFL-CIO vehemently opposes parole for Herman Bell. It must never be forgotten that Police Officers Waverly Jones and Joseph Piagentini were ambushed and murdered after being lured to their executions answering a fake E-911 call. This was an evil and vicious hate crime motivated by hatred for

police officers. For four decades, Bell denied murdering them and showed absolutely no remorse for doing so. Releasing this callous and cold-blooded killer would make a mockery of both the criminal justice system and the pain and anguish of their loved ones and fellow officers, and it would disgrace the memory and sacrifice of these good men who had no idea that they were going to be assassinated that day. No parole for Herman Bell.”