

DONOVAN MOODLEY PAROLE HEARING MEDIA

Donovan Moodley Parole Hearing

Tensions ran high outside the Johannesburg Medium B Correctional Services Centre on the Friday morning, where convicted murderer Donovan Moodley had to face the parole board.

21 Jan 2022 - The parents of Leigh Matthews - Rob and Sharon - were at the parole hearing of Donovan Moodley at the Johannesburg correctional centre, accompanied by their legal team and supported by Women and Men Against Child Abuse.

The Justice and Correctional Services Department reportedly granted the parole hearing because Moodley had served the required amount of time.

Appearing tense but determined, the couple were united as they entered the prison gates with their lawyer, Peter van Niekerk of Eversheds Sutherland, and activist Luke Lamprecht of Women & Men Against Child Abuse (WMACA).

An emotional Sharon said she was hoping the parole board would see reason and understand the feelings of the family, who had undergone such pain and loss and would have to accept that Moodley, who caused their pain, could be allowed his freedom.

A large media contingent gathered outside the prison waiting to hear the outcome.

“In our experience, the parole decision will not be made today,” said activist Miranda Jordan of WMACA, who was involved in opposing parole for child rapist [Bob Hewitt](#).

Ngaa Murombedzi spoke to SABC’s Chriselda Lewis.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r69BM_MeKwU



21 Jan 2021 – Enews - Donovan Moodley, convicted of the kidnap and murder of Leigh Matthews, appears in front of the parole board today. The Matthews family will be in attendance, supported by Women and Men Against Child Abuse. eNCA spoke to Ngaa Murombedzi, Advocacy manager for the organisation.



http://fusion.ornico.co.za/Broadcast/2022/01/21/2022_01_21_ENCA_WACA_09H34.MP4

20 Jan - Miranda speaks to Mandy Wiener on Radio 702

http://fusion.ornico.co.za/Broadcast/2022/01/20/2022_01_20_Radio702_Midday%20Report_WACA_12h45.mp3

Leigh Matthews the student who was murdered in 2005, Donovan Moodley was convicted for kidnaping and murdering Leigh Matthews and he has now been granted a parole hearing. The parents of Leigh Matthews, Rob and Sharon hey together with Women and Men Against Child Abuse are going to be protesting this pro hearing together with their legal team. Miranda Jordan the founder of Women And Men against Child Abuse joins on the line.

Women and Men Against Child Abuse says it wants to challenge the DOJ and Correctional Services to treat the parole process with the same transparency that is expected in the trial process. WMACA says the secrecy around parole results in unrehabilitated, unremorseful and dangerous inmates being released back into society.



Barry Bateman talks about the process and other issues around this parole application

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHRzijkPEo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XN6KC4TEEbA>

22 Jan - SABC News - Insult to Justice

The parole board has stated that it would be an insult to justice should Donovan Moodley be offered parole. He was sentenced to life imprisonment after a murder he committed in 2004. WMACA has also called for transparent and fair process.



An emotional Rob Matthews delivered the outcome of today's long and arduous journey through the parole hearing of [#donovanmoodley](#)

No answers to any of our questions from Moodley yet though. And he remains evasive without answering anything directly. Recommendations are to be made by the parole board and the minister now has the final say. But in all, it seemed like it was handled effectively.

For the Matthews family it felt like going to Leigh's funeral again. But they were grateful that the chairman and board members were respectful and willing to listen to them. Rob and Sharon thanked WMACA and Eversheds for the support.

We want our laws to stand! – Ngaa Murombedzi also spoke to SABC News:

Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCCO6Yltf-0>



24 Jan – Radio RSG Spektrum

Ngaa Murombedzi from WMACA who supports the family says they request that the law be changed to make the parole board more transparent.

http://fusion.ornico.co.za/Broadcast/2022/01/24/2022_01_24_RSG_WACA_12H35.MP3

22 Jan – Cape Talk

Donovan Moodley, the man who kidnapped and murdered university student Leigh Matthews in 2004, is hoping to be granted parole. Moodley's parole hearing takes place today at the Johannesburg Correctional Services facility. WACA spokesperson Ngaa Murombedzi explains

http://fusion.ornico.co.za/Broadcast/2022/01/21/2022_01_21_CAPE_TALK_WACA_15H33.MP3

21 Jan – ETV News

Oral representations were made by the victim's family at the Johannesburg Prison in Meredale. Leigh Matthews was abducted at Bond University in 2004. In 2005, Donovan Moodley pleaded guilty to murder, kidnapping, and extortion. Ngaa Murombedzi from Women and Men against child abuse elaborates on this

case and why Women and Men Against Child Abuse are calling for transparency in the parole granting process.

<https://youtu.be/w3NyNWJqtqo>

http://fusion.ornico.co.za/Broadcast/2022/01/21/2022_01_21_ETV_WACA_13H11.MP4

LEIGH MATTHEWS KILLER HAS BEEN IN JAIL FOR 15 YEARS

Moodley parole would be an 'insult to justice'

SHAIN SMILLIE, KASHIEFA AJAM AND ZELDA VENTER

SHARON and Rob Matthews painfully faced the killer of their daughter with the hope their actions would prevent a murderer walking free and committing more crimes in the future.

Yesterday the parents of murdered student Leigh Matthews got their wish when the parole board at the Johannesburg Medium B Correctional Services Centre in Merisdale told them that if Donovan Moodley was released it would be an insult to justice.

The parole board's recommendation is that Moodley remain in jail.

This was the first time in 17 years that the Matthews came face to face with Moodley, sitting across a table just a metre or so away.

Those who saw Moodley described him as looking healthy, well-groomed and sporting a new haircut.

"It was like going again to Leigh's funeral," Rob said.

The Matthews, with their lawyer Peter van Niekerk, who also happened to represent the NGO Women and Men Against Child Abuse (WMACA) who came to support the couple, spent all day yesterday at the hearing.

The Matthews had also gone into the hearing hoping that Moodley would reveal the truth about the kidnapping and murder.

It was on July 9, 2004, when Moodley abducted Leigh at gunpoint from a car park of Bond University where the



LEIGH MATTHEWS



DONOVAN Moodley, moments before he confessed in 2005 to three of the charges against him for the murder and kidnapping of Leigh Matthews. | THYS DULLAART

On July 24, 2004, Leigh's body was found in an open veld in Walkerville. She had been shot four times.

Moodley was found guilty in 2005 of murder, kidnapping and extorting money.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder, 15 years for kidnapping, and 10 years for extortion. He has maintained his innocence.

"He is still a lying, conniving individual," Rob said. "He is not an individual who smacks of any sign of remorse."

Investigators had suspected that Moodley had had an accomplice.

"So we asked him about who else was involved in the murder and he just waffled around and took us down a journey that we didn't even ask about," Rob said.

"And it is always me, me, I, I," Sharon said.

Rob read an impact statement during



THE parents of Leigh Matthews, Rob and Sharon Matthews, at the parole hearing of Donovan Moodley yesterday. | NOKUTHULA MBATHA African News Agency (ANA)

the hearing that gave insight into the effect the crime and the loss had on the family.

"By murdering our Leigh, Mr Moodley has destroyed a part in each of us close to Leigh as well as many people who did not even know her but followed her plight. Every night before we go to bed we still step into her room, hoping that by some miraculous act we'll find her there, untouched and smiling, safe and at home," part of the statement read.

Luke Lamprecht, the head of advocacy at WMACA, who also attended the hearing to provide the Matthews family with support, said the Department of Corrections "must really communicate better with the victims".

"The process (today) consisted of two parts: first was the parole hearing where the offender could provide the board and the family with his version of events. The second part was a Victim Offender Process where the victims could ask the offender questions."

Lamprecht, who could not speak during the hearing, said neither he nor

the family were clear on what the next step was.

"A lifer can only be paroled if the Minister of Justice approves it. The parole board is only there to listen to representations and make a recommendation to the minister.

"There is no reason why he should get parole, but we are, however, not clear on why, if the board recommends he not get parole, the minister would still make a final decision."

One legal expert told the *Saturday Star* that lifers may apply for parole if they had served a large part of their sentence.

"The board makes a recommendation to the minister. It's ultimately the board's decision and the minister just rubber-stamps the decision," the expert said.

Another lawyer, Gary Trappier, said the parole board was obliged to make a recommendation to the Minister of Correctional Services, backed up with supporting documents justifying the recommendation.

"The minister either approves it,

which is usually the case, or he may decline to confirm the recommendation. If the application for approval is declined by the minister it's not appealable. However, the person incarcerated (or his attorneys) may bring an application to the high court for a judicial review. In that event, on proper grounds made, the minister's decision may be set aside on the grounds that he didn't properly apply his mind to all the facts and circumstances."

Trappier said this was called a judicial review and was a part of Administrative Law; it fell outside of the ambit of Criminal Law.

"It could take as long as two years for the minister to make his judgement on Moodley's parole."

But for the Matthews, yesterday's recommendation from the parole board is a step in making sure Moodley stays in jail.

"It's bloody dangerous. That guy comes off as quite a smooth, benign and empathetic. But boy, behind that is a mind that is spinning and I feel if he got out he would just carry on," Rob said.

Saturday Star - 22 Jan 2022

25 Jan - A Comprehensive Look At The Parole Situation By Mandy Wiener

Mandy Wiener writes that in light of Leigh Matthews' killer, Donovan Moodley, applying for parole, we must examine why there is so little transparency around the process and what criteria the parole board uses to release an offender.

Those South Africans who are old enough will never forget the story of Leigh Matthews and how it gripped a nation. For 12 days in July 2004, the country waited for news. The blonde Bond University student had been kidnapped from campus a day before her 21st birthday party.

Fellow student Donovan Moodley was arrested, tried and convicted for the crime. Crack police investigator Piet Byleveld had always maintained that Moodley did not act alone and that he was not being honest about what had happened. Evidence showed that Leigh had been killed elsewhere and most likely kept refrigerated for days before being dumped.

Eligible for parole

Leigh's parents and sister have always felt that they have not learnt the full truth, that Moodley has consistently lied about what happened, that there has never been true justice, and that the story remains unfinished.

So when it emerged in mid-2021 that Moodley would be eligible for parole, they were shocked and devastated. Especially considering this was only supposed to happen in 2030, when he reached 25 years of being in prison and would be eligible for a parole hearing.

According to the Department of Correctional Service's own definition, "parole refers to that portion of the sentence of imprisonment which is served in the community under the control and supervision of correctional officials subject to conditions which have been set by the Commissioner of Correctional Services or his/her delegate". Importantly, parole is not a right, but a privilege. A Parole Board hears representations and makes a recommendation to the minister, and the decision can be taken on review.

Dr Labuschagne, the former head of the SAPS Investigative Psychology Unit, has been involved in numerous parole hearings and has been assisting the Matthews family.

"It's all vague. It's weird that representations are limited to what the victims' family verbalises at the meeting.

"They can't submit any reports from experts or have experts give an opinion at this meeting, or submit any other documentation. It's unclear who is sitting on the board. There are two members of the community, but no psychologist or social worker, so you have laypeople making recommendations about psychological treatment if the board feels it's necessary.

In a media statement released last week, **Women and Men Against Child Abuse criticised the lack of transparency.**

"We want to challenge Department of Justice and Correctional Services to treat the parole process with the same public transparency that is expected in the trial process. The secrecy around parole results in unrehabilitated, unremorseful, dangerous inmates being released back into society.

"The members of the Parole Board are accountable to the citizens of South Africa, and we intend to campaign extensively for openness and transparency and accountability in the Parole Process."

Much emphasis is placed on victim-offender dialogues in the parole process. The "Service Charter for Victims of Crime in South Africa", victims or their close relatives do have certain rights regarding the parole hearings of offenders. The DCS must inform them in writing of parole hearings and outcomes, and victims or relatives can apply to attend the hearings and can be allowed to give verbal or written input at the hearing.

This is why, on Friday last week, Sharon and Rob Matthews came face to face with Moodley for several hours, were able to ask him questions about the murder of their daughter, vent their fury directly at him, and assess for themselves whether he was telling the truth and whether he was remorseful.

According to the Victim Offender Process and what transpired during Moodley's hearing on Friday, the **Matthews' family attorneys and experts were not allowed to make representations. It all had to be done through Rob Matthews.** WMACA head of advocacy Luke Lamprecht, who was in the hearing on Friday, says it was a tricky setup because Matthews had to direct questions at Moodley.

"The amount of emotion in that is terrible. Mrs Matthews was absolutely finished. Mr Moodley is now a trained lawyer. Victims need to be completely au fait with this process and be briefed on who can be there

and say what. The anxiety and tension rose so dramatically because it was Mr Moodley and Mr Matthews and Mrs Matthews being so emotional, and it just felt really messy," says Lamprecht.

Mandy Wiener | Leigh Matthews: Why murky, vague and inconsistent parole process must change

https://www.news24.com/news24/columnists/mandy_wiener/mandy-wiener-leigh-matthews-why-murky-vague-and-inconsistent-parole-process-must-change-20220125