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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

CARLOS LOPEZ
W81382

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: January 16, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: April 24, 2025

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz¹

VOTE: Parole is granted to Interstate Compact – Connecticut, but not before serving six months in lower security and the completing a Long-Term-Residential Program or CRJ.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On November 3, 1999, in Barnstable Superior Court, Carlos Lopez pleaded guilty to murder in the second degree for the death of Jose Vasquez and Wilfredo Hernandez. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. The concurrent life sentences were ordered to run consecutively to a sentence of 4 ½ to 5 years for larceny from a person. Parole was denied after an initial hearing in 2018, and after a review hearing in 2023. On January 16, 2025, Carlos Lopez appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by student attorneys Gabrielle Emge and Katrina Winer from Harvard PLAP under the supervision of Attorney John Fitzpatrick. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Carlos Lopez's January 16, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On May 9, 1998, two bodies were discovered in the early morning hours at the American Holiday Motel in Yarmouth. One body was on the floor and the other sprawled on the bed. One individual was deceased, and the other in critical condition. The second victim died a few days later. The cause of death for both individuals was blunt force trauma to the head. Evidence developed that pointed to Carlos Lopez being the third party who

¹ Board Member Ortiz was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

² Two Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in 2 years.

stayed with the men. In a statement to authorities, Mr. Lopez indicated that he met the two men in New York City and agreed to join them on a trip to Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, the group engaged in an electronics store scam, while staying at a hotel in Yarmouth. Mr. Lopez claimed that on the night of May 9, 1998, both men began making unwanted sexual advances towards him. He reached around, grabbed an "object" off the ground, and struck the first man in the head. The men fell off the bed. Mr. Lopez then struck the second man, who fell to the floor. Mr. Lopez took money from one of the victims for bus fare back to Hartford.

Mr. Lopez fled to Puerto Rico, but was apprehended at the San Juan airport. He was extradited back to Massachusetts on July 25, 1998.

APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. In making this determination, the Board takes into consideration an inmate's institutional behavior, their participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize the inmate's risk of recidivism. M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. The Board also considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board (if applicable).

DECISION OF THE BOARD: This is Mr. Lopez's third appearance before the Board. He was 22-years-old at the time of the double murder. Since the last hearing, he has continued on his path of self-development. He completed the Violence Reduction program, as well as Alternatives to Violence. He has engaged in the Self-Improvement program. He has been employed as a runner. He has been studying to obtain his Hi-Set. He has family support to assist with his re-entry. The Board incorporates Mr. Lopez's release plan as encouraged by his legal representation. The Board considered public testimony that was submitted in opposition to parole. The Board concludes that Carlos Lopez has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Long-Term Residential Program or CRJ for 3-6 months; Release to other authority - Interstate Compact to Connecticut following program; Waive work for 2 weeks; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; Supervise for drugs; Testing in accordance with Agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence; Testing in accordance with Agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; No contact with victim(s)' family; Must have mental health counseling for trauma history and adjustment.

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above-referenced hearing. Pursuant to G.L. c. 127, § 130, I further certify that all voting Board Members have reviewed the applicant's entire criminal record. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.


Tina M. Hurley, Chair


Date