



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

DIRCEU SEMEDO
W54046

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: February 25, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: June 25, 2025

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley,¹ James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz.

VOTE: Parole is granted to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainee.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: Dirceu Semedo was convicted of first-degree murder and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, in Suffolk Superior Court, on February 22, 1993. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for first-degree murder. Mr. Semedo was sentenced to serve 3 to 5 years concurrent with his life sentence for his conviction of assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon.

Mr. Semedo became parole eligible following the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216 (2024), where the court held that sentencing individuals who were ages 18 through 20 at the time of the offense (emerging adults) to life without the possibility of parole is unconstitutional. As a result of the SJC's decision in regard to Mr. Semedo's first-degree murder conviction, his mittimus was corrected to reflect that his life sentence carried the possibility of parole after 15 years.

The Board held Mr. Semedo's initial hearing on February 25, 2025. He was represented by Attorney Ryan Schiff. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Semedo's February 25, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On April 23, 1992, a group of men, including 18-year-old Dirceu Semedo, participated in a prolonged assault on Charleston Sarjeant inside the Tasty Chicken in

¹ Chair Hurley participated in the vote on this matter prior to her departure from the Board.

Boston. Mr. Sarjeant (age 25) was ordering food with his wife and a friend. Around midnight, a group of seven men congregated outside of the restaurant. James Villaroel, a co-defendant and member of the group, threw a beer bottle against the front of Tasty Chicken, getting the attention of Mr. Sarjeant and his companions. Mr. Villaroel shouted something to the effect of "Let's shut him down," and entered the Tasty Chicken with Mr. Semedo and the other men. Mr. Villaroel struck Mr. Sarjeant in the head with a large radio that Mr. Villaroel had been carrying. Seconds later, approximately 10 to 12 men beat, punched, and kicked Mr. Sarjeant for about 5-10 minutes. Witnesses observed Mr. Semedo kicking, punching, and stomping on Mr. Sarjeant. A couple of minutes into the attack, Mr. Villaroel took a knife from his pocket and repeatedly stabbed Mr. Sarjeant. The assailants left the Tasty Chicken after Mr. Sarjeant fell to the ground and lost consciousness. The medical examiner concluded that the cause of death was a combination of multiple stab wounds and blunt head trauma.

Mr. Semedo testified at trial that he was present at Tasty Chicken for part of the attack, but he was not a participant. In statements to the Board, however, Mr. Semedo admitted to participating in the assault on Mr. Sarjeant and took full responsibility for his part in his death. When Mr. Villaroel used a knife and began stabbing Mr. Sarjeant, Mr. Semedo claims he was not "ready for the escalation." He further characterized his behavior on the night of the murder as weak and cowardly. Mr. Semedo expressed remorse for his actions and for inflicting pain on Mr. Sarjeant's family.

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.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Mr. Semedo was 18-years-old at the time of the offense, and this is his first incarceration. He is now 51-years-old. Mr. Semedo has been sober for 30 years. He began investing in his rehabilitation efforts prior to the *Mattis* decision, completing over 70 programs in all need areas. He earned his GED. His last disciplinary report was in 2012. The Board reviewed the *Mattis* factors, as well as Dr. DiCataldo's report. Mr. Semedo has served as a leader and mentor, while incarcerated. He has become a certified peer specialist. The Board considered testimony from several members of the public in support of parole. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Mr. Semedo has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Release to other authority: ICE detainer; Approve home plan before release if not deported; Electronic monitoring for 6 months (if released from ICE custody); Supervise for drugs with testing in accordance with Agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence with testing in accordance with Agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office

on day of release, or within 24 hours of release; No contact with victim(s)' family; Must have mental health counseling for 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.



Tonomey A. Coleman, Acting Chair

Date

6/25/25