



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

ERVING CRUZ
W102402

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: April 29, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: September 23, 2025

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

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in 2 years from the date of the hearing.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On April 1, 2013, following a jury trial in Bristol Superior Court, Erving Cruz was convicted of murder in the second-degree for the death of Tigan. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

On April 29, 2025, Erving Cruz appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by student attorneys Maria Russo, McKenzie Hyde, and Tobias Wilcken Joergensen from Boston College Defenders under the supervision of Attorney Frank Herrmann. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Erving Cruz's April 29, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On June 25, 2010, in Taunton, 24-year-old Erving Cruz, along with his two co-defendants, beat and stabbed 17-year-old Tigan Hollingsworth to death. Taunton police responded to Grampy's Convenience Store for the report of a disturbance. The police met with a witness, who directed them to 148 Weir Street, where Tigan Hollingsworth was observed face down on the driveway with his forearms supporting his head. The officer immediately observed a large pool of blood on the ground to the right and to the left of the victim's head.

¹ One Board Member voted to deny parole with a review in 1 year. Board Member Ortiz was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording and the entirety of the file prior to vote. Former Chair Hurley participated in the hearing, but departed the Board prior to the decision.

The victim had blood coming from his nose, his face, and his hands. The victim was mumbling, gasping for air, and stated, "I can't breathe," several times. An investigation determined that the victim and Etnid Lopez had an ongoing feud since they had been in middle school. A witness stated that a verbal argument began at Grampy's Store, while the victim was with his father. The defendants Etnid Lopez, Erving Cruz, and Jean Carlos Lopez chased the victim; he was stabbed 13 times (once in his head, once in his right abdomen, and the remaining 11 stabbings in his back). The victim later died at the hospital after the assault.

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: Mr. Cruz was before the Board for his initial hearing. He has been committed to educational pursuits, including his current enrollment in an associate's degree program. Mr. Cruz's last disciplinary report was in 2020 for homebrew. He has not completed CRA. Mr. Cruz stated at his hearing that he would like to complete his associate's degree program, while understanding that it might delay his release on parole. He further noted that his parole plan would include continued education pursuits. The Board reviewed the evaluation of Dr. Bard. The Board notes Mr. Cruz's educational pursuits and encourages him to complete his degree and establish a plan to maintain his sobriety long-term. The Board considered the opposition testimony of Bristol County ADA Karen O'Sullivan in rendering their decision. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Erving Cruz has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

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

9/23/25