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**Tina M. Hurley**  
*Chair*

**Daniel Nakamoto**  
*Acting Executive Director*

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**Israel Perez**  
**W80504**

**TYPE OF HEARING:**      **Review Hearing**

**DATE OF HEARING:**      **August 1, 2023**

**DATE OF DECISION:**      **December 12, 2023**

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Tina M. Hurley, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman<sup>1</sup>, James Kelcourse

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On December 30, 1997, at approximately 10:00 PM, the Methuen Police and the Massachusetts State Police responded to a call of a suspicious car which was running with its headlights on for approximately two hours on Chelmsford Street. Upon arrival police found a taxicab with the driver slumped over the wheel with a single gunshot wound in the back of his head. Investigation revealed that the radio cord had been cut and the driver's wallet (empty) was found about a block away.

The case was unsolved for two and a half years until investigations led to Ricardo Reyes and Israel Perez. They both made statement to the police suggesting the following:

On December 30, 1997, Perez and Reyes had a conversation about needing money. They hailed a cab while armed with a .22 caliber weapon with the intention of robbing the driver. At some point, they pointed the gun at the back of Juan Vasquez's head and demanded his money. During this robbery, Perez shot Mr. Vasquez in the back of the head. After the robbery, the two fled the taxi, were picked up by friends, and went to a local bar and sold the murder weapon.

**PAROLE HEARING:** Israel Perez appeared before the Board on August 1, 2023. He was represented by student attorneys Grace Kang and Miranda Skurla from the Northeastern University Law School under the supervision of Attorney Patricia Garin. He previously appeared

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<sup>1</sup> Board member Coleman was not present for hearing but participated in the vote after a review of the record and of the recording of the hearing.

before the Board and was denied parole in 2015, 2019, and 2021. The entire video recording of Mr. Perez's August 1, 2023, hearing is fully incorporated by reference in the Board's decision.

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." 120 C.M.R. 300.04.

After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of 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 or in written submissions to the Board, we conclude by unanimous vote that the inmate a suitable candidate for parole at this time.

The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." 120 C.M.R. 300.04. In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Perez's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board has also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Perez's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Perez's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Israel Perez does merit parole at this time. Parole reserve on or after 6 months in lower security to Casa Esperanza.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Perez was 19 years old at the time of the offense. He is now 45 years old. Mr. Perez presented with borderline intellectual functioning. Mr. Perez had been diagnosed with reactive depression, language impairment, and possible neurological impairment secondary to head trauma prior to offense (1994). He was referred to recommended treatment but does not appear to have received such treatment. It is also noted that he was hospitalized just prior to incarceration for symptoms primarily related to a depressive disorder. Since incarceration Mr. Perez reports that he repeatedly requested mental health services and treatment for ongoing addiction. The Board has expressed concerns regarding his continued substance use. Since the last hearing, he completed CRA and Restorative Justice. He was on medically assisted treatment until he was transferred to a facility that does not offer MAT. The Board has acknowledged that Mr. Perez has struggled with cognitive, mental health, and substance use disorders and requested an updated evaluation in an effort to better understand his issues, needs and treatment recommendation. The Board reviewed a comprehensive psychological assessment conducted by psychology fellow Danielle Sample, Ph.D., and supervising psychologist Jessica Greenwald, Ph.D. from William Jones College. The Board noted cognitive impairment, including low verbal IQ, that has presented challenges for Mr. Perez as well as other deficits. The Board also notes that Mr. Perez is motivated for mental health and substance use treatment. The Board agrees with the recommendations provided by the evaluators to include residential placement with on-site psychiatric services and addiction services. He will also be referred to case management services to address his ongoing needs in the community.

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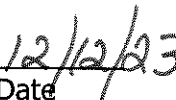
<sup>2</sup> One Board Member voted for nine months in lower security.

Mr. Perez presented with significant support systems to assist with his re-entry and ongoing needs. Speaking in support of his parole was Dr. Sample and the mother of Mr. Perez's son. The Board also considered written testimony and opposition testimony provided by ADA Emily Mello from Essex County.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Parole to Casa Esperanza after 6 months in lower security; complete Casa Esperanza program; Waive work for program; Curfew – must be home between 10pm and 6am; ELMO – electronic monitoring; Supervise for drugs – testing in accordance with agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence – testing in accordance with agency policy; Report to assigned Massachusetts Parole office on day of release; No contact or association with gangs; No contact with victim's family; Must have mental health counseling for depressive disorder, cognitive disorder; Comply with all treatment recommendations and sign all releases for information.

*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