



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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Thomas A. Turco III  
Secretary

Gloriann Moroney  
Chair

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF  
KAREEM BROWN  
W64390**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing  
**DATE OF HEARING:** January 15, 2019  
**DATE OF DECISION:** September 3, 2019

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa<sup>1</sup>

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of offense, criminal record, 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 is a suitable candidate for parole. Parole is granted to a long-term residential program with special conditions, but not before one year in lower security.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On March 26, 1998, in Suffolk Superior Court, a jury found Kareem Brown guilty of second degree murder for the stabbing death of Danclar Mead.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, Mr. Brown was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Mr. Brown appealed his conviction in 1999. The conviction was affirmed by the Massachusetts Appeals Court, and the Supreme Judicial Court denied further appellate review.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Brown then filed a motion for new trial in

<sup>1</sup> Chair Moroney was present at the vote, but abstained as she was not a Board Member at the time of the hearing. Board Member Santa was absent from the hearing, but participated in the vote.

<sup>2</sup> Kareem Brown was originally tried in 1996, but the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict (forcing a mistrial).

<sup>3</sup> See Commonwealth v. Brown, 48 Mass. App. Ct. 1116 (2000); Commonwealth v. Brown, 431 Mass. 1103 (2000).

2003. The Massachusetts Appeals Court denied the motion, and the Supreme Judicial Court denied further review.<sup>4</sup>

In the early morning hours of March 15, 1994, Mr. Mead (age 31) was driving around in his car with Mr. Brown (age 21) and two juvenile boys (ages 15 and 16). Mr. Mead had purchased beers for all three passengers, which they had all consumed. At some point, they decided to go to the Burger King on Washington Street in Dorchester. The restaurant was closed, except for the drive-through, so they ordered food and ate in the vehicle. As they were eating in the car, one of the juveniles offended Mr. Brown by reaching into his bag to take some french fries. Mr. Brown took a knife from the juvenile and used it to scare the boy. Mr. Mead told Mr. Brown to leave the boy alone, but Mr. Brown ignored him and continued to scare the boy by swinging the knife towards the boy's face. Mr. Mead exited the vehicle, went to the passenger side, and had Mr. Brown get out of the car. Mr. Brown got out of the vehicle with the knife in hand. It is unclear exactly what happened next, but one of the juveniles inside the car witnessed Mr. Brown stab Mr. Mead once in the chest. The boy then saw Mr. Mead grab his chest and fall forward, while Mr. Brown stabbed Mr. Mead a second time (in the back).

After the stabbing, Mr. Brown left Mr. Mead on the ground and attempted to flee in the vehicle, but was unsuccessful as he could not operate a standard shift. He then tried to hand the bloody knife back to the teenager he had taken it from, but the boy let it fall to the floor of the vehicle, where it was later recovered by police. Mr. Brown and the two teenagers left the scene, with Mr. Brown warning them not to "snitch." Sometime thereafter, Mr. Brown fled to Florida, where he was later arrested and returned to Massachusetts.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JANUARY 15, 2019**

Kareem Brown, now 46-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on January 15, 2019. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Brown was denied parole after his initial hearing in 2010, and after his review hearings in 2015 and 2017. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Brown said that Mr. Mead had been his neighbor and friend. He apologized to Mr. Mead's family for causing his death through his "reckless" and "foolish" behavior. Mr. Brown explained that his poor decision-making on the night of the murder, fueled by heavy alcohol consumption, led him to stab Mr. Mead and leave the scene of the crime. He now recognizes that "life is precious" and that he is responsible for his own actions.

The Board noted that Mr. Brown's most recent disciplinary report occurred in 2010 and that he has engaged in significant programming. In the two years since Mr. Brown's last review hearing, he has maintained his job in the library and completed Graduate Maintenance Program, Anger Management, and substance abuse counseling. Mr. Brown told the Board that he attributes his positive institutional adjustment to over 24 years of sobriety, which allowed him to pursue educational opportunities and to give back to the community through programs like Project Youth. Mr. Brown detailed a parole plan to include a step-down to minimum security and pre-release, and then to a long-term residential program. Mr. Brown explained that he would benefit from this gradual transition, as he could establish his independence and obtain employment before release. With support, including that of many members of his

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<sup>4</sup> See Commonwealth v. Brown, 63 Mass. App. Ct. 1108 (2005); Commonwealth v. Brown, 444 Mass. 1104 (2005).

family, Mr. Brown told the Board that he seeks to live as a contributing member of his community.

The Board considered the testimony of Mr. Brown's son in support of parole. Suffolk County Assistant District Attorney Charles Bartoloni testified, and submitted a letter, stating that he did not oppose parole. The Board considered the written submissions of both Mr. Mead's widow and Mr. Mead's brother in opposition to parole. The Board also considered the written submission of Boston Police Commissioner William Gross in opposition to parole.

### **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Mr. Brown has demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. He has served 25 years of a life sentence.

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. Brown'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. Brown's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Brown's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Kareem Brown merits parole at this time. Parole is granted to a long-term residential program with special conditions, but not before one year in lower security.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Waive work for Long Term Residential Program; Must be at home between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am; GPS; 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 adjustment/transition; Long Term Residential Treatment program for no less than 90 days; AA/NA at least three times/week.

*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.*

  
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Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

9/13/19  
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Date