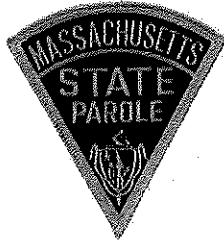


*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*



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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

MARCUS BLANTON
W97785

TYPE OF HEARING: **Initial Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **July 24, 2025**

DATE OF DECISION: **January 6, 2026**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sarah B. Coughlin, Angelo Gomez Jr., James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz¹

VOTE: Parole is granted on or after six months to Interstate Compact (Florida).

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On January 3, 2011, in Hampden Superior Court, Marcus Blanton pleaded guilty to murder in the second-degree for the death of Aaron Waldon. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he pleaded guilty to four counts of assault to murder and four counts of assault and battery with serious bodily injury and received a 5-7 year consecutive sentence on those charges. On that same date, he pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm and received a 2 year consecutive sentence. He also received a 1 year sentence for possession of a firearm without an FID card and possession of a Class B substance. All sentences were ordered to run from and after his life sentence.

On July 24, 2025, Mr. Blanton appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney John Rull.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On May 30, 2009, at approximately 1:35 a.m., police responded to Club 418 in Springfield for a disturbance. Police observed patrons rushing out of the club and

¹ Board Member Alexander was not present for the vote. The Chair deemed Board Member Alexander unavailable for the vote on this matter because, due to a malfunction in the Board's audio equipment, she was unable to review the full record of the public hearing. Former Acting Chair Coleman was present for the hearing but had departed the Board prior to the vote in this matter.

found one shooting victim on the sidewalk. Witnesses later told police that a black male exited the men's room and fired multiple shots from a handgun toward the bar, which was in the middle of the club. He then exited towards Worthington St. and was wearing jeans, a black tee shirt, and a baseball hat. Two troopers that arrived on scene were driving parallel to Worthington St. and observed a black male wearing jeans, a black tee, and baseball hat walking towards a dumpster. When told to stop and show his hands, Marcus Blanton (age 24) attempted to flee. The troopers cuffed him and put him in the back of a cruiser and continued to assist at the club. One trooper removed Mr. Blanton from the cruiser to perform a more thorough pat frisk. He observed a black Smith and Wesson handgun with the slide locked back and the orange tip of an ammunition magazine lying on the rear passenger floor. The locked back slide indicated that the weapon was out of ammunition and had been fired. An eyewitness at the scene positively identified Mr. Blanton as the shooter. There was a total of 5 shooting victims at the club. One victim was pronounced dead that night, and four other victims had injuries to the chest, abdomen, calf, knees, thighs and buttocks.

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. Blanton presented for his initial hearing before the Board. Since his incarceration, Mr. Blanton has invested in self-development, including earning his BA from Emerson. Mr. Blanton addressed the precipitants that led to the offense and has invested in Restorative Justice and understanding as to how his mental health issues and substance use influenced his behavior. He demonstrated insight into his offending behavior and motivation to continue with treatment in the community. Mr. Blanton has a strong support system and re-entry plan. He has gained numerous occupational skills, earning his OSHA and Bio-Hazard certification. The Board considered public testimony from supporters and those who spoke in opposition to his parole in rendering its decision. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Marcus Blanton has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Release to other authority: Interstate Compact Florida; Waive work for 2 weeks; Electronic monitoring for 3 months, if receiving state agrees; 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 substance abuse evaluation and follow recommendations; 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.



Angelo Gomez, Jr., Chair

January 6, 2026
Date