



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

CLEVELAND MARTIN
W93470

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: January 22, 2026

DATE OF DECISION: June 22, 2026

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

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

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On December 16, 2008, following a jury trial in Suffolk Superior Court, Cleveland Martin was convicted of murder in the first-degree for the death of Heueur Previlon. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. On that same date, a charge for armed robbery was filed.

Mr. Martin 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 regarding his first-degree murder conviction, Mr. Martin was re-sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years.

On January 22, 2026, Mr. Martin appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Phillip Cormier. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Martin's January 22, 2026, hearing.

¹ Board Members Bonner and Ortiz were not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

² One Board Member voted to deny parole with a review in 3 years. Two Board Members voted to grant parole after 1 year in lower security.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: In the early morning hours of August 25, 2005, Cleveland Martin (age 19) and his accomplice, Jashawn Robinson, stabbed to death 32-year-old Heueur Previlon during a robbery in Brighton. Mr. Previlon, who was working as a cab driver that morning, picked up the men at the Reservoir MBTA station and drove them to the Fidelis Housing Development in Brighton. Once there, Mr. Martin and Mr. Robinson physically assaulted Mr. Previlon. During the assault, Mr. Previlon was stabbed once in the chest, causing massive blood loss and death within seconds. The men took Mr. Previlon's money and property and fled the cab to a nearby apartment. Once there, they sent a woman who lived at the apartment back to the cab to retrieve clothing and a cellular phone left behind during the robbery. Police later determined that the men had used their cellular phones to call three different cabs that night, but that two of the cab drivers had refused their fare. Mr. Martin was arrested approximately one month later in Virginia.

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.

Where a parole candidate was convicted of first-degree murder for a crime committed when he was ages 18 through 20 years old, the Board considers the "unique aspects" of emerging adulthood that distinguish emerging adult offenders from older offenders. Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216, 238 (2024). Individuals who were emerging adults at the time of the offense must be afforded a "meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation" and the Board evaluates "the circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime, including the age of the offender, together with all relevant information pertaining to the offender's character and actions during the intervening years since conviction." Id. (citing Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk Dist., 466 Mass. 655, 674 (2013) (Diatchenko I); Miller v. Alabama, 567 U.S. 460, 471 (2012); Graham v. Florida, 560 U.S. 48, 75 (2010)). Since brain development in emerging adulthood is ongoing, the Board also considers the following factors when evaluating parole candidates who committed the underlying offenses as an emerging adult: 1) a lack of impulse control in emotionally arousing situations; 2) an increased likelihood to engage in risk taking behaviors in pursuit of reward; 3) increased susceptibility to peer influence which makes emerging adults more likely to engage in risky behavior; and 4) an emerging adult's greater capacity for change. See Mattis, 493 Mass. at 225-229.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Cleveland Martin was 19-years-old at the time of the offense and became parole eligible as a result of the Mattis decision. Mr. Martin's institutional adjustment has been marred by over 30 disciplinary reports of which 11 were related to controlled substances. Mr. Martin's rehabilitative programming has been mostly completed in the last few years. The Board finds Mr. Martin would benefit from a longer period of rehabilitative program engagement, along with a sustained time period without disciplinary reports. The Board encourages Mr. Martin

to continue with his educational pursuits. The Board considered testimony in support of parole from 5 members of Mr. Martin's family and from Dr. Maryanne Galvin. The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from Suffolk County Assistant District Attorney Montez Haywood. The Board concludes that Cleveland Martin 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.


Angelo Gomez Jr., Chair

June 22, 2026
Date