

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

MATTHEW FARLEY
W38635

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **April 9, 2025**

DATE OF DECISION: **September 8, 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 December 16, 1981, in Suffolk Superior Court, Matthew Farley pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of D.S.² He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, Mr. Farley received concurrent life sentences for armed robbery and armed assault in a dwelling. Also, on that same date, he received a concurrent 8-to-10-year sentence for breaking and entering. Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 1996, and after his review hearings in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019.³

On April 9, 2025, Matthew Farley appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by Attorney Michael Phelan. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Matthew Farley's April 9, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On March 14, 1981, at approximately 1:00 p.m., 18-year-old Matthew Farley and co-defendant Weldon Burden broke into the Boston apartment of 28-year-

¹ Former Chair Hurley participated in the hearing on this matter but departed the Board prior to this decision.

² The victim's name is withheld in accordance with G.L. c. 265, § 24C.

³ Mr. Farley postponed a review hearing in 2024.

old D.S. by smashing open the front door. The co-defendants then robbed her, and one of the men raped and fatally stabbed her. Mr. Farley, who testified against Mr. Burden at his trial, claimed that Mr. Burden chased D.S. into the bathroom, where Mr. Burden grabbed her by the hair, hit her, demanded money, ripped off her jeans with a knife, and then proceeded to rape and stab her. Mr. Farley claimed that he stole jewelry, a camera, a stereo, and other valuables, while Mr. Burden attacked D.S. Both men fled the apartment with her valuables. Mr. Farley claimed that he later returned to their apartment, where Mr. Burden met him at the door, stating, "I killed the bitch." The co-defendants then sold the stolen camera and split the proceeds.⁴

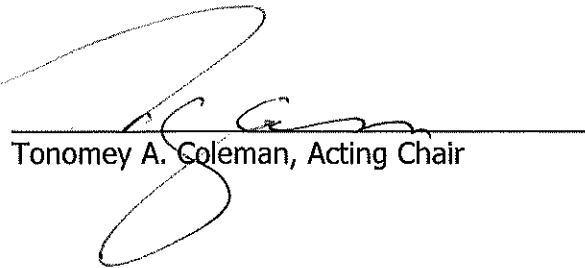
Meanwhile, D.S., who suffered from a four to six-inch stab wound to her abdomen, managed to call police. Shortly before the ambulance arrived, a nearby nurse heard D.S. say, "Get a doctor." When the nurse entered the apartment, she asked her what had happened. D.S. responded that she had been raped and stabbed. The nurse checked D.S. for injuries, saw that she had a stab wound on her right side, just below the rib cage, and tried to stop the bleeding with a towel. D.S. lost consciousness shortly after describing her attackers to the nurse. The stab wound cut through her liver and aorta, causing a massive hemorrhage. She was transported to Boston City Hospital, where she succumbed to her injury and was pronounced dead.

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: The Board finds that Mr. Farley is still in need of further rehabilitation. He is high risk on the LSCMI risk assessment tool. The Board was unable to evaluate Mr. Farley's needs as no forensic evaluation was presented. The Board finds such an evaluation would be helpful. Mr. Farley has active substance use issues. He has a lengthy disciplinary history, including 54 disciplinary reports since his last hearing. He has only completed two programs since his last hearing. The Board is setting a shorter review period with the hope that Mr. Farley would benefit from working with counsel and can present with a rehabilitation plan including an evaluation. The Board considered testimony from two individuals who spoke in support of parole. Suffolk County ADA Montez Haywood spoke in opposition to parole. The Board also considered opposition letters. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Mr. Farley has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

⁴ Mr. Farley's co-defendant, Weldon Burden, admitted at trial to breaking into D.S.'s apartment, selling her camera, and splitting the proceeds later that day. *Commonwealth v. Burden*, 15 Mass. App. Ct. 666 (1983).

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 9/8/25