



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



**PAROLE BOARD**

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**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**MICHAEL FOSTER**  
**W46916**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** January 30, 2025

**DATE OF DECISION:** May 7, 2025

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Edith J. Alexander,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz

**VOTE:** Parole is denied with a review in 2 years from the date of the hearing for the reasons stated.<sup>2</sup>

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY:** On August 14, 1989, in Norfolk Superior Court, Michael Foster was convicted of murder in the second degree for the death of his wife, Anna Foster. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2004, and after review hearings in 2009, 2014, 2019, and 2023. On January 30, 2025, Michael Foster appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by student attorneys Arzu Singh and Frank Obermeyer from the Harvard Prison Legal Assistance Project under the supervision of Attorney Joel Thompson. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Michael Foster's January 30, 2025, hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On December 20, 1986, 18-year-old Anna Foster's naked and clothesline-bound body was discovered in a pond in Wrentham. Ms. Foster had been missing since November 1, 1986. It was determined that Ms. Foster died of strangulation and that her body had been in the pond for several weeks at the time it was discovered. Michael Foster (age 22) and Ms. Foster attended a Halloween party on the evening of October 31, 1986. After the

<sup>1</sup> Board Member Alexander was not present for the hearing but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

<sup>2</sup> Three Board Members voted to grant parole with special conditions.

party, they went to a friend's house. In the early morning hours after leaving the friend's house, Mr. Foster strangled his wife, tied her body with a clothesline, and put her body in a nearby pond in an attempt to conceal the crime. Mr. Foster also joined in efforts to try and find his wife.

Mr. Foster fled to Florida after the body was discovered and, while there, he was convicted of several offenses, including battery on a law enforcement officer, disorderly conduct, and grand theft (stealing an automobile). Although he initially fought extradition, Mr. Foster was returned to Massachusetts in 1989 to face the murder charge.

**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:** Mr. Foster is 60-years-old and has been incarcerated for over 35 years. He has a lengthy history of disciplinary reports, but has incurred none since 2017. Since his last hearing, he has completed 24 programs, including Alternative to Violence, Jericho Circle, Restorative Justice Retreat and the Family Violence Education Group. The Board finds that Mr. Foster continues to minimize his pattern of domestic violence. He received his GED in 1991. He reports prior substance misuse, but states he has been sober for nearly 30 years. The Board notes the programming he has been engaged in has mostly been recent and finds a lengthier period of reflection and rehabilitation is needed. Four of Ms. Foster's family members spoke in opposition to parole. Norfolk County Assistant District Attorney Laura McLaughlin spoke in opposition to parole. The Board concludes that Mr. Foster 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.*

  
Tina M. Hurley, Chair

  
Date