



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

MICHEL ST. JEAN  
W105294

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Initial Hearing

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

**DATE OF DECISION:** March 19, 2026

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

**VOTE:** Parole is granted on or after 2 weeks of issuance of Decision to an approved home plan.<sup>1</sup>

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY:** On September 24, 2014, following a jury trial in Suffolk County Superior Court, Michel St. Jean was convicted of murder in the first-degree for the death of Richel Nova. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was sentenced to a concurrent term of 5 to 7 years for armed robbery and a concurrent term of 1 to 3 years for breaking and entering in the nighttime with intent to commit a felony, which was deemed served.

Mr. St. Jean 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. St. Jean was re-sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years.

On December 9, 2025, Mr. St. Jean appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Rosemary Scapicchio. The Board’s decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. St. Jean’s December 9, 2025, hearing.

<sup>1</sup> Two Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in 2 years from the date of the hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On September 1, 2010, 20-year-old Michel St. Jean participated with his co-defendants in the stabbing death 58-year-old Richel Nova during the commission of an armed robbery in Boston. On the afternoon of September 1, Mr. St. Jean and his co-defendants were overheard devising a plan to rob someone. That evening, Mr. St. Jean and his co-defendants took a bus to a vacant house in Hyde Park. Using a neighbor's phone, they called a pizzeria and placed an order for delivery. They also asked if the delivery driver would have change for large bills. Mr. Nova arrived with the order and was escorted up the rear staircase of the vacant house. Five minutes later, Mr. St. Jean and his co-defendants left the house with a pizza box and drove away in Mr. Nova's vehicle. The vehicle was later found abandoned in a parking lot. In and around the vehicle, officers recovered a pizza box, empty bleach, and rubbing alcohol bottles. The label on the outside of the pizza box listed the delivery address as that of the vacant house and had Mr. St. Jean's cell phone number listed as the call-back number.

Officers responding to the vacant house found Mr. Nova unresponsive. His pant pockets were turned inside out, and he had visible puncture wounds. Mr. Nova did not survive his injuries. Officers discovered significant forensic evidence implicating Mr. St. Jean and his co-defendants. Fingerprints and DNA were found at the vacant house, on Mr. Nova's body and car, and on the pizza boxes. Mr. St. Jean and his co-defendants also made inculpatory statements when interviewed by police.

**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:** Mr. St. Jean was 20-years-old at the time of offense. He appeared before the Board for the first time. He is now 35-years-old. Mr. St. Jean is currently in minimum security. His LS/CMI is low. Mr. St. Jean began to invest in rehabilitative programming prior to the Mattis decision. He has minimal disciplinary reports. This was his first incarceration, no prior record. Mr. St. Jean acknowledged the brutality of this offense and, although not responsible for stabbing the victim, his actions and inactions contributed to the death of the victim. Mr. St. Jean earned his GED and is participating in community college courses. Mr. St. Jean has also acquired employment skills and is currently in the NEADS Program. Mr. St. Jean does not have a substance use disorder or mental illness. He has established a release plan to address his re-entry needs. Mr. St. Jean also has a support system to assist him with transition to the community. The Board considered the testimony of an educator, a social worker, and Mr. St. Jean's family and friends in support of parole. The Board considered the testimony of Mr. Nova's family member and Suffolk County ADA Montez Haywood in opposition to parole. The Board concludes that Michel St. Jean has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Approve home plan prior to release; Waive work for 2 weeks; Must be home between 10 PM and 6 AM or Parole Officer's discretion; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; 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 or association with co-defendant [named individual] at Parole Officer's discretion; No contact with victim's family; 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

March 19, 2026  
Date