

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



**PAROLE BOARD**

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**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**  
**NORMAN PORTER**  
**W35127**

**TYPE OF HEARING:**            **Review Hearing**

**DATE OF HEARING:**        **March 24, 2022**

**DATE OF DECISION:**      **July 5, 2022**

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On September 29, 1960, Norman Porter and his accomplice, Theodore Mavor (both armed and masked), participated in an armed robbery of the Robert Hall Clothing store in Saugus. During the commission of the crime, one of the men shot and killed the store clerk, Jackie Pigott, with a sawed-off shotgun. The other man shot and wounded the store manager, Ralph Fabiano, with a handgun. While being detained for this crime at the Middlesex County Jail in East Cambridge, Mr. Porter secured a firearm and conspired with another inmate, Edgar Cook, to escape. During the escape, Mr. Cook took Mr. Porter's firearm and shot and killed the jail master, David Robinson.

On October 31, 1961, while awaiting trial for the murder of Mr. Pigott, Mr. Porter pleaded guilty in Middlesex Superior Court to murdering Jail Master Robinson and was sentenced to life in prison. On May 18, 1962, Mr. Porter was convicted of second-degree murder in Essex Superior Court for the death of Mr. Pigott. He received a life sentence consecutive to his life sentence for the murder of Jail Master Robinson. At that time, Mr. Porter also received multiple life sentences for armed robbery while masked, which were ordered to run concurrently with the life sentence for the murder of Jail Master Robinson. He received additional concurrent sentences for lesser charges, which have all since expired.

On September 3, 1975, Governor Dukakis commuted the Robinson sentence, and the concurrent life sentences, to a term of 36 years and 6 months to life, making Mr. Porter immediately eligible for parole to his from and after life sentence in the Pigott case. He was paroled to the Pigott sentence on September 22, 1975. While serving the Pigott from and after sentence, Mr. Porter escaped from custody on April 27, 1980. He voluntarily returned to

custody on April 29, 1980. Eight months later, on December 21, 1985 (while in custody at the Norfolk Pre-Release Center), Mr. Porter walked away from the facility and never returned. He was placed on escape status and deemed a parole absconder on the Robinson case. A parole violation warrant was issued on January 9, 1986.

Mr. Porter eluded detection and apprehension for nearly 20 years, when Massachusetts authorities arrested him in Chicago, Illinois on March 22, 2005. He was returned to Massachusetts the following day.<sup>1</sup> During his time in Chicago, Mr. Porter assumed the name Jacob A. Jameson ("J.J. Jameson"), established himself as a poet, lectured at a local church, and worked as a handyman. On October 14, 2005, a Norfolk Superior Court judge sentenced Mr. Porter to serve 3 years to 3 years and 1 day for the 20-year escape and ordered the sentence to run from and after the life sentence in the Pigott case.<sup>2</sup> This new sentence was aggregated to the Pigott sentence, as it occurred prior to 1988,<sup>3</sup> and Mr. Porter became eligible for parole in November 2009.

Mr. Porter appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on March 24, 2022. He was represented by Attorney Thomas Herman. This was Mr. Porter's fourth appearance before the Board since his return to custody in March 2005. The entire video recording of Mr. Porter's March 24, 2022, hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of offense, criminal record, institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the Board, we conclude by a unanimous vote that the inmate is a suitable candidate for parole.

Reserve to an approved home plan.<sup>4</sup> He has served 42 years, 25 of which he served before escaping. He was on the run for 20 years before being returned to custody. The Board notes that Mr. Porter suffers from numerous severe medical conditions. He has remained disciplinary report free and has remained in programming despite limitations from his health issues and COVID-19. The Board notes he has maintained a significant support network through most of his incarceration. Despite his history of escapes, a former Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Correction testified in support of his release. He has known his home sponsor, a physician since 1969. Mr. Porter has made every effort to take part in available programming at the maximum-security facility, including mentoring others in the educational programs

The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society."

In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Porter's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board has also considered a risk and needs

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Porter had a Final Revocation Hearing for parole violations on the Robinson case and, on October 30, 2007, the Full Board voted unanimously to affirm the revocation and allow the warrant to stand.

<sup>2</sup> The escape sentence is a crime committed while on parole and, since it occurred prior to July 1, 1994, carries a 2/3 of the minimum sentence parole eligibility, which in this case is 2 years.

<sup>3</sup> Parole Board regulations had dictated that a sentence received for a crime committed on or after January 1, 1988, shall not be aggregated with a life sentence for the purposes of calculating parole eligibility on the consecutive sentence. This regulation is no longer in effect. Pursuant to *Dinkins & another v. Massachusetts Parole Board*, 486 Mass. 605 (2021), the Parole Board will aggregate parole-eligible life sentences with consecutive determinate sentences for purposes of determining a single parole eligibility date.

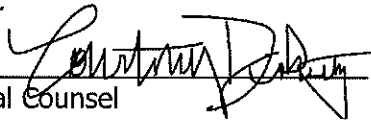
<sup>4</sup> Two Board Members voted to reserve Mr. Porter to a skilled nursing home.

assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Porter's risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Porter's case, the Board is of the opinion that Mr. Porter is rehabilitated and merits parole at this time.

**Special Conditions:** Reserve to an approved home plan; Waive work for medical and age; Curfew must be at home between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.; ELMO-electronic monitoring; Must take prescribed medication; 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 – adhere to plan; Must have mental health counseling for adjustment/transition; Mandatory – sign all releases and follow recommended treatment of all providers.

*I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing.*

/s/ Pamela Murphy p.p.  
Pamela Murphy, General Counsel



7/5/22  
Date