



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

RAFAEL GUZMAN

W92062

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **November 21, 2024**

DATE OF DECISION: **February 24, 2025**

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

VOTE: Parole is granted to Casa Esperanza after 6-month step-down to lower custody.¹

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On April 30, 2008, in Hampden Superior Court, Rafael Guzman pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of 31-year-old Ronnie Hannas and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Mr. Guzman was denied parole after his initial hearing on November 30, 2021. Rafael Guzman, now 49-years-old, appeared before the Board on November 21, 2024, for a review hearing. He was represented by student attorneys Julia Trencher and Jacob Weinstein from the Northeastern School of Law. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Mr. Guzman's November 21, 2024, parole hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: In the early morning hours of December 7, 2006, Springfield police responded to a call regarding a shooting. Officers located Ronnie Hannas inside an apartment, suffering from multiple gunshots wounds. He was transported to the hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. During the investigation, police learned of a feud between Mr. Hannas and occupants of the same apartment building where he was shot. Two men had a confrontation with Mr. Hannas and another individual. During this confrontation, the taller of the two men shot Mr. Hannas. Three witnesses positively identified Mr. Guzman's co-defendant as the shorter of

¹ Two Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in 1 year from the date of the hearing. One Board Member voted to deny parole with a review in 2 years from the date of the hearing.

the two men. After Mr. Guzman's co-defendant was arrested, he told police that his cousin, Rafael Guzman, had been arguing with Mr. Hannas over drugs. The co-defendant stated that Mr. Guzman was under the influence of drugs and shot Mr. Hannas. Mr. Guzman was subsequently arrested and charged with murder.

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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the incarcerated individual'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. Guzman appeared before the Board for the second time after a 3-year setback. Since his last hearing, he has received two disciplinary reports. He is assessed as medium-risk on the LS/CMI risk-needs assessment tool. The Board notes Mr. Guzman's insight into his substance use issues and mental health. He has enrolled in M.A.T. He participates in the NEADS program. He has completed Victim Impact, CRA, and various other programs. He demonstrated insight and empathy at the hearing. He has a comprehensive re-entry plan which will meet his needs. He has strong family support. The Board concludes that Rafael Guzman has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

Hamden County District Attorney Michael Julian testified in opposition to parole. A family member of the victim also testified in opposition of parole.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for program; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; 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 mental health evaluation and follow recommendations; Must have mental health counseling for adjustment and relapse prevention; Long-Term Residential Treatment - complete; AA/NA at least 3 times per week.

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