



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

RAYMOND GRENIER
W43213

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: January 28, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: May 14, 2025

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

VOTE: Parole is granted to an approved home plan after a 6 month step down to lower security.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: Raymond Grenier was convicted of first-degree murder and armed robbery on February 5, 1987, following a jury trial in Middlesex Superior Court.³ Mr. Grenier received the mandatory punishment of life in prison without the possibility of parole upon conviction of first-degree murder. Mr. Grenier was sentenced to a concurrent term of life in prison with the possibility of parole for the armed robbery conviction.

Mr. Grenier 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 between ages 18 through 20 (emerging adults) at the time of the offense to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole is unconstitutional. As a result of the SJC's decision, Mr. Grenier was re-sentenced on his first-degree murder conviction to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years. An initial parole hearing occurred on January 28, 2025, in which Mr. Grenier was represented by Attorney Laurence Cohen. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Grenier's January 28, 2025, hearing.

¹ Board Member Alexander was not present at the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and participated in the vote.

² Three Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in two years.

³ Raymond Harmon was also convicted of the murder and armed robbery of Frederick Slavin.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: The murder of 75-year-old Frederick Slavin occurred on November 14, 1985, in Lowell. Mr. Slavin, known as "Pops," was employed as a delivery driver for a package store in Lowell, where he worked for two decades. Many members of the community, including Raymond Grenier, knew that Mr. Slavin regularly cashed checks for customers and often carried large amounts of cash with him. Mr. Slavin cashed checks on behalf of Mr. Grenier's co-defendant on at least two occasions. On November 14, 1985, Mr. Slavin went to the rear of an office building in Lowell to deliver a case of beer phoned in that day by an unidentified caller. The delivery call was a ruse to lure Mr. Slavin to the area and rob him. Mr. Slavin's body was later found behind the building in a pool of blood. Severe head trauma was inflicted using a blunt instrument. The pockets of Mr. Slavin's pants were turned inside out and empty. Police recovered a brown bag near Mr. Slavin's body that contained several thousand dollars.

On the day of the murder, police were directed to the residence of Mr. Grenier's uncle. Mr. Grenier and others were present when the police arrived. Mr. Grenier, who was 19-years-old, went to the Lowell police station that day to provide a statement about his activities earlier in the day. The questioning continued into the night, and Mr. Grenier consented to testing for traces of blood. Traces of blood which matched Mr. Slavin's blood type were found on Mr. Grenier's hands, hairline, and the soles of his sneakers. At trial, witnesses testified to inculpatory statements made by Mr. Grenier. Mr. Grenier testified in his own defense.

APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole 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." G. L. c. 127, § 130. The Board considers multiple factors in making its decision, including the incarcerated individual's institutional behavior; their participation in available work, education, and treatment programs during their incarceration; and whether the incarcerated individual's chances of recidivism could be reduced by participation in risk reduction programs. G. L. c. 127, § 130. The Board considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the entirety of the incarcerated individual's criminal record, the incarcerated individual's institutional record, the incarcerated individual's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public expressed at the hearing and/or in written submission 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

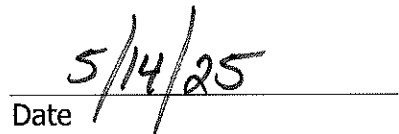
susceptibility to peer influence which makes emerging adults more likely to engage in risky behavior; and 4) an emerging adult's greater capacity for change. See Mattis, 493 Mass. at 225-229.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Mr. Grenier appeared before the Board for an initial parole hearing following the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Mattis. He has been incarcerated for 39 years. He is employed at MCI-Norfolk. Mr. Grenier earned his GED in 1995. He has completed Violence Reduction, Emotional Awareness, Jericho Circle, and other rehabilitative programming. He has remained disciplinary report free for approximately nine years. He denied any substance misuse issues. Mr. Grenier continues to assert his innocence. He provided the Board with various employment and volunteer opportunities he would pursue, if paroled. The Board considered the forensic evaluation of Dr. Andrea Dinsmore and the report of Ronald Michaels. Multiple people spoke in support of Mr. Grenier. Family members of the victim spoke in opposition.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; Approve home plan before release; Waive work for two weeks; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; Supervise for drugs with testing in accordance with Agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence with testing in accordance with Agency policy; 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.


Tina M. Hurley, Chair


Date