



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

**PAROLE BOARD**

*12 Mercer Road*  
*Natick, Massachusetts 01760*



**Maura T. Healey**  
*Governor*

**Kimberley Driscoll**  
*Lieutenant Governor*

**Terrence M. Reidy**  
*Secretary*

*Telephone: (508)-650-4500*

*Facsimile: (508)-650-4599*

**Tina M. Hurley**  
*Chair*

**Lian Hogan**  
*Executive Director*

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**ROBERT FERREIRA**  
**W45197**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Initial Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** January 22, 2025

**DATE OF DECISION:** May 15, 2025

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

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

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY:** Following a jury trial in Barnstable Superior Court, Robert Ferreira was convicted of first-degree murder on two theories: (1) extreme atrocity or cruelty and (2) deliberate premeditation. On August 17, 1988, the court sentenced Mr. Ferreira to life in prison without the possibility of parole.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Ferreira 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 in prison without the possibility of parole is unconstitutional. As a result of the SJC's decision, Mr. Ferreira was re-sentenced on his first-degree murder conviction to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years. An initial hearing occurred on January 22, 2025, where Mr. Ferreira was

---

<sup>1</sup> Board Member Coughlin was not present at the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing prior to vote.

<sup>2</sup> The Board voted unanimously to deny parole. One Board Member voted for a review in 1 year from the date of the hearing.

<sup>3</sup> The jury also returned guilty verdicts for kidnapping (9-10 years) and robbery (life with the possibility of parole) with each sentence to be served concurrently with Mr. Ferreira's sentence of life in prison without parole for his murder conviction.

represented by Attorney Michelle DeCoursey. The Board incorporates, by reference, the entirety of Mr. Ferreira's January 22, 2025, hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** Robert Ferreira (age 20), along with Kevin Galford,<sup>4</sup> kidnapped, robbed, and murdered 45-year-old George Ouellette on or about June 2, 1987. The victim's body was found in the Cape Cod Canal, partially submerged. The assailants placed ligatures on the victim's arms and legs, which rendered him unable to swim. The victim's hands were bound behind his back and his legs were tied with jumper cables attached to a metal toolbox. The victim had visible injuries that were inflicted while he was still alive. The medical examiner concluded that Mr. Ouellette died due to drowning associated with a blunt impact injury.

A substantial amount of evidence inculpated Mr. Ferreira in the murder. Mr. Ferreira was connected to the murder after police discovered that Mr. Ouellette's debit card was used to withdraw \$200 from an ATM during the early morning hours of June 2, 1987. Surveillance footage captured Mr. Ferreira making the withdrawal. Friends of Mr. Ferreira testified to driving Mr. Ferreira and Mr. Galford to a rest area on Route 140 for Mr. Ferreira to collect money owed to him. The rest area was known as a location where gay men would meet to have sex. Following the murder, Mr. Ferreira left Massachusetts with a female companion to visit his father in New York. At trial, the companion testified that he and Mr. Galford robbed and drowned Mr. Ouellette. Specifically, they picked up Mr. Ouellette at the rest area, took his car, forced him to withdraw \$200 from an ATM, and drowned him in the canal.

Prior to his parole hearing, and during his initial hearing, Mr. Ferreira admitted to his role in the murder. Mr. Ferreira stated that he and Mr. Galford planned to rob someone at a rest area that gay men were known to frequent. According to Mr. Ferreira, he sat on a picnic table, waiting for a man to approach him. Mr. Galford remained out of sight, hiding in the woods. Eventually, Mr. Ouellette approached Mr. Ferreira, and the men began conversing. Mr. Galford approached the victim from behind, placed a cord around his neck, and pulled the victim to the ground. Mr. Galford held the victim on the ground and Mr. Ferreira proceeded to assault the victim. Mr. Ferreira admitted to taking the victim's keys and wallet. When realizing that Mr. Ouellette did not have much cash on him, the men decided to use Mr. Ouellette's debit card to withdraw cash from his account. The men forced the victim into the trunk of the victim's car. The men obtained the victim's P.I.N. and drove to the bank to withdraw cash from the victim's account. Mr. Ferreira indicated that they intended to release the victim; however, the victim saw Mr. Ferreira's face and he decided to kill the victim to minimize the likelihood of going to prison for the robbery and kidnapping. The men found an area on the edge of the canal and walked the victim into the water. Before killing Mr. Ouellette, Mr. Ouellette looked at Mr. Ferreira and stated that the men lied to him about letting him go. The men proceeded to drown him.

**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

---

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Galford was likewise convicted of first-degree murder, kidnapping, and robbery. Mr. Ferreira and Mr. Galford's cases were severed for trial.

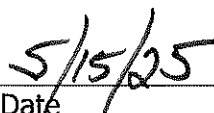
incarcerated individual's chances of recidivism could be reduced by participation in risk reduction programs. G. L. c. 127, § 130. The Board considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the entirety of 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:** This was Mr. Ferreira's first appearance before the Board. He was 20-years-old at the time of the offense. Mr. Ferreira has engaged in rehabilitative programming to include Addiction Treatment, Violence Prevention, higher education through Boston University, and Victim Empathy. Mr. Ferreira acknowledged that he developed an addiction during his incarceration, and his last use was in 2022. Mr. Ferreira is currently enrolled in additional programming and waitlisted for other programs that will further his self-development. Mr. Ferreira recognized the need for continued treatment and requested specific programs to further his recovery needs via Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA) and to engage in Restorative Justice Programming. The Board considered his age at the time of the offense; however, the Board was troubled by the facts and circumstances related to this crime. The Board considered the expert testimony and report of Dr. Emily Brown. The Board also considered public testimony in rendering its decision, including that of Mr. Ferreira's cousin in support of parole and that of the victim's family members in opposition to parole. The Cape & Islands District Attorney's Office provided testimony in opposition to parole.

*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