

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

Gina K. Kwon
Secretary

Telephone: (508)-650-4500

Facsimile: (508)-650-4598

Angelo Gomez, Jr.
Chair

Lian Hogan
Executive Director

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

VINCENT RIVERA

W69842

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: November 25, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: March 17, 2026

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sarah B. Coughlin, Angelo Gomez Jr., James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz¹

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review in 3 years from the date of the Hearing.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On August 17, 2001, following a jury trial in Middlesex County Superior Court, Vincent Rivera was convicted of murder in the first-degree for the death of Aladdin Al-Taher. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was found guilty of armed assault with intent rob and received an 18–20-year sentence and a 4–5-year sentence for possession of a firearm. Both sentences were ordered to run concurrently with his life sentence.

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

On November 25, 2025, Mr. Rivera appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney John Cunha. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Rivera's November 25, 2025, hearing.

¹ Chair Gomez was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

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

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On October 22, 2000, 18-year-old Vincent Rivera and his co-defendant shot and killed 19-year-old Aladdin Al-TaHER during an attempted armed robbery in Lowell. That morning, Mr. Al-TaHER was working at his brother's variety store when Mr. Rivera and his co-defendant entered the store wearing "scream" masks and gloves. Mr. Rivera was carrying a firearm. The men forced Mr. Al-TaHER behind the counter with the gun and demanded that he open the cash register. They were unsuccessful in obtaining money from the register. Mr. Rivera then struck Mr. Al-TaHER and took a pack of cigarettes. Mr. Rivera and his co-defendant began to exit from behind the counter when Mr. Al-TaHER ran after them. As he approached Mr. Rivera, Mr. Rivera raised his gun and shot him in the head. Mr. Al-TaHER died later that morning at Lowell General Hospital.

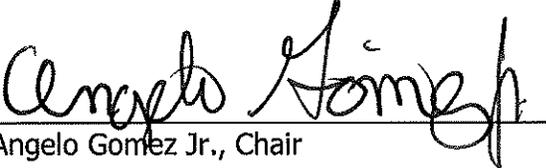
APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain 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. Rivera presented for the first time before the Board. He was 18-years-old at the time of the offense, and he is now 44-years-old. Mr. Rivera has served 25 years. Mr. Rivera accepted responsibility for fatally shooting the victim; however, he maintains that it was not his intent. Mr. Rivera has worked on understanding the causal factors to his criminal lifestyle and has begun to engage in rehabilitative programs to address his need areas.

Mr. Rivera acknowledged that he has struggled with substance abuse and his behavior throughout his incarceration. Mr. Rivera is currently engaged in programming and does appear to be committed to sobriety. Mr. Rivera also appears to have gained more insight into his need areas, having participated in a forensic evaluation. However, the Board is of the opinion that Mr. Rivera's change has been recent, and that he has yet to achieve a sustained period of sobriety and positive adjustment. The Board encourages Mr. Rivera to continue with his rehabilitation to include Substance Abuse treatment, continued Restorative Justice programming and Conflict Resolution. The Board considered the expert forensic evaluation by Dr. Maryanne Galvin in rendering its decision. The Board considered testimony from those who spoke in support. The Board also considered the testimony of Middlesex County ADA Alicia Walsh in opposition to parole. His LS/CMI risk/needs assessment is very high. The Board concludes that Vincent Rivera has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

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 17, 2026
Date