



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

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**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**WAYNE GRANT**  
**W52828**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Initial Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 11, 2025

**DATE OF DECISION:** June 30, 2025

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner,<sup>1</sup> Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley,<sup>2</sup> James Kelcourse, and Rafael Ortiz.

**VOTE:** Parole is granted to a Long-Term Residential Program after 90 days in lower security.<sup>3</sup>

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY:** On February 4, 1991, following a jury trial in Suffolk Superior Court, Wayne Grant was convicted of murder in the first-degree for the death of Gary Bass. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. In addition, he was convicted of three other offenses and received concurrent sentences as follows: assault and battery with a dangerous weapon (8-10 years), unlawfully carrying a firearm (3-5 years), and assault with intent to murder (18-20 years).

Mr. Grant 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 Mr. Grant's first-degree murder conviction, the mittimus was corrected to reflect that Mr. Grant's sentence carried the possibility of parole after serving 15 years.

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<sup>1</sup> Board Member Bonner was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

<sup>2</sup> Chair Hurley participated in the vote in this matter prior to her departure from the Board.

<sup>3</sup> One Board Member voted to parole after a 6-month stepdown to lower security.

On February 11, 2025, Mr. Grant appeared before the Board for an initial parole hearing. He was represented by Attorney Amy Belger. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Grant's February 11, 2025, hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On February 4, 1988, in Boston, 20-year-old Wayne Grant killed 32-year-old Gary Bass and assaulted a 31-year-old female. Mr. Grant, a known drug dealer, had an arrangement where Mr. Bass sold drugs on Mr. Grant's behalf. When Mr. Grant learned that Mr. Bass was simultaneously selling for another drug dealer, he instructed Mr. Bass to stop selling for the other dealer. However, Mr. Bass continued to do so. On February 3, 1988, Mr. Grant and another person went to the apartment of Mr. Bass and a female. An argument transpired between Mr. Grant and Mr. Bass regarding Mr. Bass' defiance of Mr. Grant's order. The female overheard the argument before going to bed. When she awoke at 1:15 a.m. on February 4, 1988, she went to the kitchen and saw Mr. Grant and three other men in the living room. She noted that the men (whom she knew) were quiet. One of the males had a revolver that was visible in the waistband of his pants. The female asked if something was wrong, but she was told to "shut up." Upon returning to the bedroom, a shot was fired into the room and the female dropped to the floor. Mr. Bass' body was beside her. Another shot followed. The female looked up and saw Mr. Grant standing in the doorway. Mr. Grant then shot the female, striking her in the arm. After being shot, the female "played dead." According to the female victim, Mr. Grant walked up to the spot where both she and Mr. Bass were on the ground and fired two more shots. One of the shots caused Mr. Bass' body to jolt. When police responded to the home, the female victim reported to police that Mr. Grant shot them. Mr. Grant admits that he was involved in the killing, but he denies being the shooter.

**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. Grant, now 57-years-old, has been incarcerated in Massachusetts for the past 33 years. He was 20-years-old at the time of the murder and became parole eligible due to the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Commonwealth v. Mattis. While incarcerated, Mr. Grant earned his bachelor's degree from Boston University and has successfully completed more than 91 rehabilitative programs - most of which he completed prior to the Mattis decision that rendered him eligible for parole. Mr. Grant has held leadership positions in many of these programs. Mr. Grant's last disciplinary report for violence was more than 25 years ago. Mr. Grant has strong support from his community and family and a well-supported release plan. In making this decision, the Board considered the expert testimony of psychologist Laura Guidry and the testimony of Mr. Grant's friends and family in support of parole. The Board heard testimony in opposition to parole from Mr. Bass' sister and Suffolk County Assistant District Attorney Montez Haywood.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Long-Term Residential Treatment - Gavin House or CRJ; Waive work for program; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; Supervise for drug abstinence with testing in accordance with Agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence with 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 and follow recommendations; 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.*

  
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Tonomey A. Coleman, Acting Chair

6/30/25  
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Date