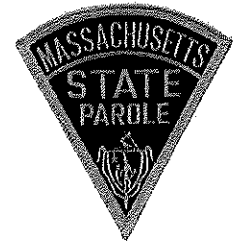


The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

ZAKARIYA IBRAHIM-BUSH
W57052

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: May 21, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: October 27, 2025

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

VOTE: Parole is granted to Sober House.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On August 29, 1994, after a jury trial in Plymouth Superior Court, Mr. Ibrahim-Bush was found guilty of two counts of murder in the first-degree and received two concurrent sentences of life in prison without the possibility of parole. On April 25, 1996, in Plymouth Superior Court, Mr. Ibrahim-Bush received a consecutive 1 to 2 year sentence for assault and battery on a correctional officer. On June 5, 1998, in Norfolk Superior Court, Mr. Ibrahim-Bush received an a concurrent 4 to 4 years and 1 day sentence to be served from and after the murder sentence for assault by means of a dangerous weapon and assault and battery on a correctional officer. On that same date, he received another concurrent 2 to 3 years sentence to be served from and after the murder sentence for malicious destruction of property.

Mr. Ibrahim-Bush 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 in regard to his first-degree murder conviction, Mr. Ibrahim-Zakariya was re-sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years.

¹ Board Member Coleman and Board Member Coughlin were not present for the hearing, but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to voting.

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

On May 21, 2025, Mr. Ibrahim-Bush appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Amy Belger. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Ibrahim-Bush's May 21, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On December 13, 1991, 19-year-old Zakariya Ibrahim-Bush, FKA Kevin Bush, shot and killed 22-year-old Melvin Bonnet and 20-year-old Christopher Green at an apartment building in Brockton. Mr. Ibrahim-Bush resided in the building with his girlfriend and her children. Approximately three weeks before the murders, Mr. Ibrahim-Bush's girlfriend told him she was afraid as she believed Mr. Bonnett had been pointing at the door to her apartment. Mr. Ibrahim-Bush assured her that no one would hurt her. On the evening of December 13, 1991, Mr. Ibrahim-Bush left his apartment and was heard moments later saying, "[N]o one's getting my woman," followed by a sound "like firecrackers." Brockton police officers were dispatched to the building, where they found Mr. Bonnet and Mr. Green suffering from gunshot wounds. Mr. Ibrahim-Bush had been observed in possession of two firearms earlier that day.

The investigation, which included eyewitness testimony and ballistics information, determined that Mr. Ibrahim-Bush was responsible for the shooting. It was later discovered that Mr. Ibrahim-Bush had been residing in New York under the name "Kalvin Johnson." He was later identified and arrested and then extradited back to Massachusetts to be charged for the murders.

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.

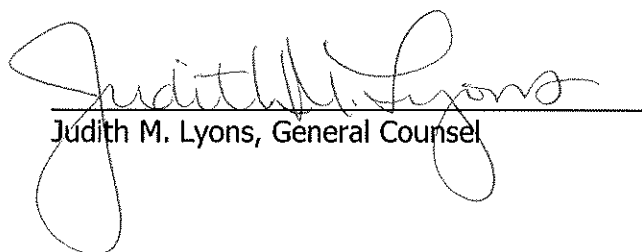
Where a parole candidate was convicted of first-degree murder for a crime committed when he was ages 18 through 20 years old, the Board considers the "unique aspects" of emerging adulthood that distinguish emerging adult offenders from older offenders. Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216, 238 (2024). 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: This is Mr. Ibrahim-Bush's first appearance before the Board. He is 52-years-old and has been incarcerated for the past 31 years. Although Mr. Ibrahim-Bush's behavior during his initial period of incarceration was troubling, his last disciplinary report involving violence occurred almost 20 years ago. Mr. Ibrahim-Bush was made parole eligible due to the Mattis decision; however, his participation in rehabilitative programming began well before this time. While incarcerated, Mr. Ibrahim-Bush has participated in many meaningful programs addressing his risk and need areas, including Restorative Justice and Alternatives to Violence. Mr. Ibrahim-Bush obtained his GED while incarcerated and is now enrolled at Boston College and plans to continue his education upon release. Mr. Ibrahim-Bush has a solid re-entry plan prepared by Shawn Galvin. The Board also considered the expert forensic evaluation prepared by Dr. Frank DiCataldo, who determined Mr. Ibrahim-Bush to be a low risk for recidivism. The Board considered testimony from members of the community both in support of, and in opposition to, parole. The Board concludes that Zakariya Ibrahim-Bush has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for 2 weeks; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; 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 families; Must have mental health counseling for adjustment; Residential program Sober Home

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.


Judith M. Lyons, General Counsel

10/27/25
Date