

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS – PLYMOUTH DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY



**TIMOTHY J. CRUZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

MAIN OFFICE:

166 Main Street
Brockton, MA 02301
Tel: (508) 584-8120
Fax: (508) 586-3578

**NEWS RELEASE
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**CONTACT: BETH STONE
(508) 584-8120**

**STATE PAROLE BOARD DENIES PAROLE FOR MAN WHO MURDERED ROCKLAND
MAN**

BROCKTON – The state Parole Board has issued their unanimous opinion to deny parole to a man who murdered a 22 year-old Rockland man in 1995, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has announced.

On February 21, 1994, then 17-year-old Steven James and several of his friends were in a parking lot of a sandwich shop in Rockland. Some distance away, an argument began between the victim, Edward Sullivan, and one of James's friends. Sullivan took a baseball bat out of his van and used it to fend off James's friend, but did not actually swing it. The friend then called to James who, with several of their other friends, ran toward them and began taunting Sullivan. During this encounter, Sullivan, who was pushed to the ground, dropped the bat and lay motionless on his stomach as people repeatedly hit and kicked him. Throughout the beating, Sullivan pleaded with them to stop and made no attempt to fight back. James picked up the bat and swung it three times at Sullivan's head. Sullivan was taken to a hospital, where he died two days later as a result of head injuries.

On April 11, 1995, James was convicted of murder in the first degree but because James was 17 years old at the time of the murder, he became parole eligible following the Supreme Judicial Court decision in Diatchenko. James' parole hearing in June, 2019 was his initial appearance before the board and DA Cruz submitted a letter in opposition and spoke at the hearing.

The Board voted unanimously to deny parole to James and made notification to the District Attorney's Office today. He will be eligible for a review hearing in three years.

In their decision, the Parole Board noted that James has had at least three disciplinary reports while incarcerated, including threatening a correctional officer in 2014. While the Board acknowledged the programming James has completed, they determined that he has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. They urged James to complete the Victim Offender Education Group and remain free from disciplinary reports.

"Edward Sullivan was brutally and senselessly murdered with a baseball bat held by Steven James," DA Cruz said. "We are pleased that the state Parole Board saw fit to deny him parole."