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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**STATE PAROLE BOARD DENIES RELEASE OF MAN WHO SHOT AND  
KILLED HIS GRANDMOTHER, THEN SET HER ON FIRE**

**BROCKTON** – The state Parole Board has once again denied parole to a man who murdered his grandmother in 1980, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has announced.

On January 30, 2025, the state Parole Board issued its decision denying parole for James Riva II, now 67 years-old. Parole has been denied for Riva after his initial hearing in 2004, and after review hearings in 2009, 2014, 2019, and now 2024.

“This defendant murdered his own grandmother and set her on fire,” DA Cruz said. “I can only describe his actions as brutal, senseless and inhumane. Our streets and communities are safer today with Riva remaining in prison.”

On April 10, 1980, Marshfield Police and Fire responded to the home of 74 year-old Carmen Lopez, Riva’s grandmother, for reports of a house fire. After the fire was extinguished, the body of Mrs. Lopez was located on a bedroom floor. An autopsy later revealed that Mrs. Lopez had been shot multiple times.

Marshfield Police contacted Massachusetts State Police and an investigation commenced. Investigators determined that on the day of the murder, Riva, then 22, borrowed a car and drove to his grandmother’s house. Mrs. Lopez asked Riva to do a load of laundry, and while in the basement, Riva retrieved a gold painted gun and bullets. Riva proceeded back upstairs where he shot his grandmother several times. After shooting her, he dragged her body into a bedroom and drank blood from the victim’s wounds. Afterward, Riva poured dry gas on the victim and lit her body on fire and left the house.

Riva told investigators that he needed the gun to protect himself from vampires, and that he painted the gun and the bullets gold because he believed this was the only way that vampires could be shot.

In 1981, a Plymouth County jury found Riva guilty of second-degree murder, and he was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. Riva was additionally found guilty of Arson and sentenced to a consecutive term of 19 to 20 years.

In their decision, the Parole Board wrote, “The Board remains concerned that, within the last five years, he (Riva) became symptomatic with extreme paranoia similar to his delusions that occurred prior to the homicide. The Board also verbalized concerns that he may continue to harbor animosity toward those who (he believes) have wronged him.”

The board went on in their decision, “Mr. Riva continues to perseverate on his perceived injustices and affronts as endorsed by his continued court filings. The content of such filings raises concern that he has not resolved his anger and resentments.”

Parole is denied with a review in three years in October, 2027.