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PAROLE GRANTED TO CONVICTED MURDERER IN 1995 FATAL SHOOTING

NATICK – The state parole board has granted parole to an adult man convicted of First-Degree Murder in connection with a 1995 fatal shooting in Brockton, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has announced.

Yesterday, our office was notified that Ernest Benjamin, 50, is set to be released to a home plan approved by the state parole board. Members of victim Anthony Simmons' family and the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office spoke in opposition of Benjamin's release at his April 17 parole board hearing.

On July 30, 1995, a then 20-year-old Benjamin fatally shot Simmons, 27, on a street in Brockton after a brief verbal dispute. The defendant fled to Puerto Rico in the aftermath of the shooting before ultimately returning to the Commonwealth and turning himself in to the Brockton Police Department.

Benjamin was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. In 2024, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's ruling in *Commonwealth v. Mattis* determined that life without the possibility of parole sentences are unconstitutional as applied to "emerging adults" between the ages of 18 and 20.

"Our office will always be a voice and fight for victims of crime in all of our cases," DA Cruz said. "We will continue to oppose the release of violent criminals who choose to ignore our laws and have forever harmed innocent people in our communities."