



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## NORFOLK DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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## Press Release

### Life in prison for 2017 Weymouth Domestic Violence Murder

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A former member of the Massachusetts Most Wanted List has been sentenced to life in prison without the possibility for parole for the murder of his one-time girlfriend in her Weymouth home in August 2017, according to Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey.

Cornel Bell, 50, was found guilty of murder in the first degree based both on pre-meditation and the extreme atrocity of stabbing Michelle Clarke 15 times after ambushing her in her home. First-degree murder carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole eligibility for adults in Massachusetts, District Attorney Morrissey said.

"This was a brutal domestic violence homicide, ending a promising life and leaving a young child to grow up without his mother," District Attorney Morrissey said. Michelle Clarke was 33 when murdered in August 2017.

"After stabbing her to death, Bell fled to Cape Cod and eventually Florida. It took months of coordinated investigation between Weymouth Police, Massachusetts State Police homicide detectives and Violent Fugitive Apprehension Section, US Marshals, and Florida law enforcement to locate him," Morrissey said. "He was finally confronted at a construction site in Florida and apprehended after a brief pursuit. He has been held without bail since that time."

In addition to the effective work of law enforcement officers, District Attorney Morrissey also praised Assistant District Attorney Carolyn Hely for her work in the case. "Defense conceded that Bell killed her, but argued that the actions did not reflect the pre-meditation or extreme atrocity necessary for a first-degree conviction," Morrissey said. "ADA Hely meticulously showed the jury the evidence that he was lying in wait for her to get home, and also the extent and nature of the attack. We believe the jury returned the correct verdict."

The Jury began deliberations Wednesday, June 29, 2022 and returned it unanimous verdict on Friday, July 1, 2022 in the afternoon.

District Attorney Morrissey urged anyone who might know someone in a violent or controlling relationship, or who is in such a relationship themselves, to learn about safety planning and the resources available to help victims get safe. From

<https://www.mass.gov/domestic-violence-services>:

**SafeLink is Massachusetts' statewide 24/7 toll-free domestic violence hotline and a resource for anyone affected by domestic or dating violence. 877-785-2020**

**If you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH), call 711 - MassRelay Service.**

Advocates are bilingual in English and Spanish and have access to a service that can provide translation in more than 130 languages.

**The National Domestic Violence Hotline offers assistance and safety planning 24/7.  
1-800-799-SAFE (7233) TTY 1-800-787-3224**

**If you're unable to speak safely, you can chat online at [thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org)**