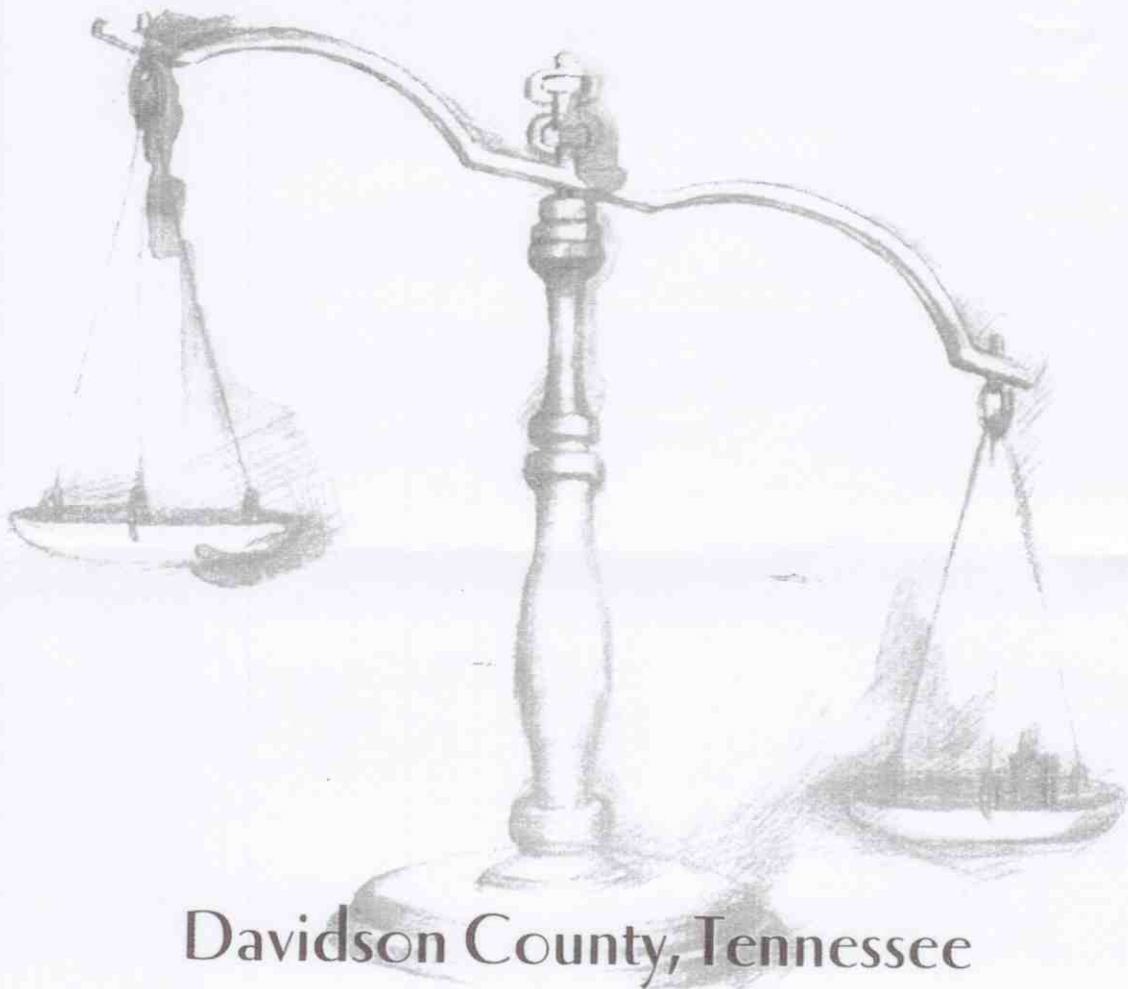


Grand Jury Final Report

The Honorable Seth Norman
Criminal Court, Division IV



Davidson County, Tennessee
April 7, 2008 - June 27, 2008

**REPORT OF THE GRAND JURY OF DAVIDSON COUNTY
APRIL TERM, 2008**

The members of the Davidson County Grand Jury for the April 2008 term are truly grateful to have had the opportunity to serve our community. The time we spent as jurors has given us a significant amount of knowledge about the work of the police department, district attorney's office, and the courts. We have also learned a great deal about crime in Nashville and the various components of our criminal justice system.

Serving under the leadership of our foreman, Mr. Richard Hillenbrand, has been a wonderful experience. His expertise was invaluable when we had questions about the meaning of the different types of charges as we were presented with each case. He also did a remarkable job of facilitating the various trips we took, scheduling speakers, and setting up ride-alongs with the police department. It has been a pleasure to work with Mr. Hillenbrand and all of us would be happy to serve with him again, if given the opportunity to do so.

In accordance with Tennessee Rules of Criminal Procedure, the Grand Jury deliberated upon 1291 cases over the past three months. We presented the court with 1282 True Bills and 9 No True Bills. We feel that we have been diligent in deciding if the charges were appropriate and justified and determining if a prima facie case was made by the witness appearing before us.

We would like to thank the following individuals for taking the time to provide us with information that helped us perform our duties:

District Attorney General Victor (Torry) Johnson, III gave us an excellent overview of the history of the grand jury, our duties and responsibilities, and our role in the judicial process.

Chief of Police, Ronal Serpas, spent several hours with us discussing the work of the police department and their efforts to combat crime in our community. He shared a lot of data with us, but probably the most significant thing we learned was that the same individuals are responsible for most of the criminal activity in Nashville.

The recidivism rate in Davidson County is a huge problem. Of the 13,684 persons arrested over the past twelve months, 76.1% were previously arrested for some other

offense and nearly 50% of them were arrested for the exact same crime. Metro Police have identified 446 individuals who have been arrested numerous times for the same or similar offenses. These 446 criminals have been arrested a total of 10,377 times. That means that on average, each of them has been arrested 23 times. It is very frustrating to police officers to have to arrest these same individuals over and over again. It appears to us that the only way to reduce the recidivism rate is by incarcerating repeat offenders for longer jail terms without the opportunity for early parole.

Captain Todd Henry of the the Drug Task Force gave us a detailed look at the world of illegal drug trafficking in Nashville. He brought along samples of various drugs and drug paraphernalia. The education we received from his presentation was very valuable because we heard an extremely large number of drug related cases.

Captain Rita Baker from the Domestic Violence Division gave us an excellent presentation on domestic assaults, and child abuse and neglect. We were dismayed to learn that the police department received 17,000 reports of domestic violence last year and that 30% of emergency room visits are due to domestic assaults. We did learn that there are lots of resources available to victims of domestic violence in Nashville and feel that these agencies, along with the Metro Police Department, are doing an excellent job.

The Grand Jury heard several cases that involved child neglect, child abuse, and sex related crimes committed against children. Frequently, we felt that the bond set for an individual arrested for this type of crime was set too low, and we recommended that it be increased. We also observed that too often there appears to be a lack of communication between the police department and the State Department of Children's Services. We recommend that a liaison person be appointed within the police department to coordinate and facilitate information and communication between law enforcement and the DCS.

We inspected the DCSO Criminal Justice Center, the Police Training Academy, the medical examiner's lab, the TBI, the Nashville Airport Police, Juvenile Court, RiverBend State Prison, and the Davidson County Community Corrections Drug Court. We were given reasonable access to these facilities and had an opportunity to ask many questions. Additionally, we attended a Metro Nashville Police Department Crime Analysis meeting, or Comstat.

All arrestees are brought to the Criminal Justice Center for booking. The booking room appeared to meet the needs of the police department, and procedures for classifying an individual and assigning a housing location seemed to go smoothly. The jail itself was

