

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER TERM GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Jury duty is one of the highest forms of civic responsibility that a citizen can perform. We are proud to have been given the opportunity to fulfill this responsibly as members of the Davidson County Grand Jury. For this we would like to express our thanks and appreciation to **Judge Seth Norman**, Judge in the 4th Division of the Criminal Courts. This remarkable man and founder of the Davidson County Drug Court was an inspiration to us all as we performed our duty as Grand Jurors.

The Grand Jury is the citizens' panel that reviews charges that have been made against a person and determines whether those charges go forward into the Criminal Courts. (True Bill or No True Bill). The Grand Jury is the Gatekeeper to the Criminal Courts. Our experience has been enlightening, educational and informative, often disturbing, and occasionally heartbreaking in this 90 days crash course in crime and punishment and the Criminal Justice System.

During our term we heard 723 cases as presented and returned 713 True Bills and 10 No True Bills. We took one case from the District Attorney under advisement and determined that it had no merit to be brought before the Grand Jury.

As a part of our prescribed duties we had presentations and discussions with the following members of the Criminal Justice system:

District Attorney, Torry Johnson--The DA discussed the history of the Grand jury and the legalities surrounding it. This orientation was informative and invaluable to us as new Grand Jurors.

Assistant DA, Michaela Mathews--DA. Mathews presented the inner workings of the Grand Jury and the proper procedures to follow in our deliberations. She, as well as fellow DA's Mary Hausman and Rodney Faulk, were extremely helpful with legal questions that arose on individual indictments.

Chief of Police, Ronal Serpas--The Chief explained his administrative model for the Department and the state of crime and crime prevention in our community. His advocacy of "Community Policing" and his use of statistics to illustrate his presentation were truly impressive.

Police Lieutenant, Randy Hickerson--the exhibit brought by this Special Investigations Division (Vice) supervisor was invaluable to our consideration in the numerous indictments presented to the Grand Jury involving drug possession and re-sale. To actually see and hold the various drug types and paraphernalia that we heard about in these cases allowed us to have a much clearer picture of the illegal drug trade and use on the streets of Nashville.

Police Captain, Rita Baker--Domestic violence is one of the fastest growing and least understood crimes in our community. Captain Baker thoroughly explored this devastating offense with us and the consequences surrounding it. The pictures of the abused were appalling.

General Sessions Judge, John Aaron Holt--Judge Holt explained the role of the General Sessions Courts in the Justice System and how cases, felonies and misdemeanors reached the Grand Jury. We were very appreciative that he took time away from the bench and a heavy docket to accommodate us.

The Grand Jury also toured and inspected the following correctional facilities and law enforcement agencies:

The Criminal Justice Center-- This facility (jail) operated by the Davison County Sheriff's Department is primarily for pre-trial detainees. The daily movement of inmates for courts, for releases, and internally for recreation and sick call was almost overwhelming. This created a sense of controlled chaos but with the officers clearly in command. We were impressed with the classification process and the difficulty of housing "special needs" detainees. Our guide was Chaplain Susan Gray and she was exceedingly knowledgeable about the facility and passionate but realistic about her job of assisting inmates. The

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Booking Room was in a temporary location until a new area was constructed. We were among the first to tour this new and improved area while still under construction.

Juvenile Court--Judge Betty Adams Green gave us an overview of the Juvenile Justice System and how it differs in philosophy from the Adult System. Judge Green's administrative assistant, Tim Adgent, toured us through the Juvenile Court. Both articulated the challenges facing the Court, particularly in a structure poorly designed to facilitate the rehabilitative function of the Court. It was of note that the detention area of Juvenile Court is contracted to a private company. We inspected this area accompanied by Supervisor Pat Curran. Detainees of both sexes are housed in the same area. The education program for those children was impressive. Security concerns due to increasing number of violent juvenile offenders were the number one issue.

Riverbend Maximum Security Institution --This maximum security prison is operated by the Tennessee Department of Correction and houses the worse and most dangerous convicted felons in the State. We toured this facility with the cooperation of Warden Ricky Bell and led by Counselor Bill Smith. Particularly of interest was the stop on Death Row, where we spoke to an inmate that had resided there under the death penalty for 27 years. Security was tight and there was not much attempt at rehabilitation.

Tennessee Prison for Women--Arrangements for the Grand Jury visit were made by Assistant Warden Johnson and the site visit was conducted by Corporal Miller. We were impressed by the programs that allowed certain inmates, based on good behavior, to visit over night with their children and the PAWS program that allows interaction with pets. We observed lunch being served and inmates lined up for sick call. The number being seen by doctors was surprising. All levels of security are housed in this facility.

Metro Police Training Academy--A well trained police force is a necessity in order to protect the public. We observed the training regimen and procedures that are used by our Police Department. Whereas the facility is antiquated, the methods and technology are first rate. Thanks to Lieutenants Glenn Yates and Bill Sneed we were able to experience the difficulty and rigorousness of the requirements first hand. We were able to test our skills on the gun range and in the FATS shooting simulator so as to appreciate the accomplishments of the trainees. The canine drug and bomb detection exercises and apprehension techniques were impressive. The new detection equipment bought through Homeland Security grants and installed on the police helicopter is state of the art.

Central Police Precinct--Commander Andy Garrett conducted a tour of this downtown station. He described the organizational structure of the precinct and detailed some of the peculiar problems facing law enforcement in a growing and changing Downtown. Articulate and conversant on the challenges facing the officer on the street, he motivated a number of our Jurors to ride along on patrol in the evening of our visit. The experience was educational and some what exhilarating.

Davidson County Drug Court--Nationally acclaimed and recognized, DC4 is the only drug court with a residential treatment component. Founded by Judge Norman and with Janet Hobson as director, the Drug Court not only saves lives, but also money, as the cost of treatment is much less than incarceration and infinitely more effective. Housing non-violent felony offenders both male and female, the Drug Court offers a viable alternative to the vicious cycle of repeat offenders we saw so often in the cases presented to the Grand Jury. Guided by residents of the program and listening to their stories, this tour was the bright spot in our term. We urge continuing support and expansion of this program.

We would like to make the following observations and recommendations based upon our service and experience as Grand Jurors:

Guns, Drugs, and Alcohol-- These were the common denominator in the vast majority of the cases

