

REPORT OF THE GRAND JURY

To

The Honorable J. Randall Wyatt, Jr.
Judge, Division II, Criminal Court
Davidson County, Tennessee

During the past three (3) months we have served as the Grand Jury for the Criminal Court of Davidson County, Tennessee. We appreciate being given the opportunity to fulfill this obligation. It has been an honor to serve your court and the community in which we live.

Mr. James Utley,, Court Officer for Division II of the Criminal Court, as well as Ms. Sandra Mullins and Ms. Georgia Smith of the District Attorney's Office gave us invaluable support and guidance that allowed this Grand Jury to process in excess of 600 cases and function as an effective unit.

The majority of the cases we heard were presented by police officers who, for the most part, were well prepared, dedicated, and conscientious civil servants. They work under difficult and very dangerous conditions and deserve total support from the community and the courts. We recognize the effectiveness of the "walking" patrol officers and encourage the continued and expanded use of this program.

It appears that most of the cases which came before us involved defendants that began their criminal activities in their youth. They have been processed through the system with little risk of serious punishment. This was especially true in many of the drug cases we heard. Most defendants had multiple arrests and convictions. They would serve a small portion of their sentence,

be released, and return to their life of crime. This problem will continue until the offenders are made to realize that the severe punishment they will suffer for such behavior will be much greater than any gains they might receive or envision. We would like to recommend tougher non-incarceration consequences, tougher probation restrictions, tougher community service time, and educational programs to help deter the repeat offender.

We would like to suggest that an experimental mediation unit, under the jurisdiction of the courts, be created to deal with neighborhood disputes and other non-violent offenses. Parties could go to mediation, and the mediated settlement would be enforceable in the courts. We also encourage the continued use of drug treatment for the many drug offenders in our courts. We would like for defendants incarcerated for the offenses of stalking or harassment to have their telephone privileges restricted and monitored. More than one victim has reported to us that they were continually harassed over the telephone by incarcerated defendants.

Stiffer sentences are not the only deterrent to crime. Most criminals grow up in an environment where there is not a strong supportive family unit. Parents must gain control of their children and be good role models. Strong moral values should be taught and encouraged at an early age. The schools should be expected to educate our children rather than be given the full responsibility of raising them.

Finally, we would like to suggest the creation of a special Grand Jury to investigate the drug activity in Davidson County. Families, merchants, and members of neighborhood associations could be asked to appear in an effort to rid our community of this affliction which is a contributing factor to so many crimes, destroys the moral fiber of the family unit, and requires an enormous amount of time and expense in the criminal justice system.

In closing, the Grand Jury wishes to thank the various individuals who have supported us. We especially want to thank Judge J. Randall Wyatt, Jr., and District Attorney General Torry Johnson for their assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

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