

Final Report
Of the
Grand Jury

*Filed
6-28-02
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April 2002 Term

To:

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

During the April Term of 2002, we served at the Grand Jury for the Criminal Courts of Davidson County, Tennessee. We appreciate being given the opportunity to fulfill this obligation to our fellow citizens. It has been an honor to serve your court and the community in which we live and work.

During our term we handled over 600 cases.
26% were Drug or Alcohol related
Assault charges accounted for over 14% the cases we heard
Several of the defendants appeared to be repeat offenders

Mayoral Visit

The Honorable Bill Purcell joined us for an informal session to discuss the findings of the audit of the police department. It was recommended that Metro hire more officers and we as the grand jury agree with this finding. In addition to the Mayor, Karl Dean, Metro Legal Director spoke to us about Metro's crackdown on massage parlors, enhanced options schools in high-risk neighborhoods.

We as the Grand Jury would support setting up a juvenile drug court, along with more support funding for the adult drug court

We recommend that Metro keep hiring new police officers and supplying them with laptops for their cars.

Site Visits

During our time on the Grand Jury, we were able to have several presentations made to us and were able to make visits to institutions in the judicial system.

- ❑ Our first presentation was from Capt. Valerie Meese of the Domestic Violence who explained to us that the prime motivation behind most Domestic assault cases were not out of anger, but out of control of the other person in the relationship.
- ❑ We did an on-site visit to the police-training academy. The K-9 Patrol did a demonstration for the jurors showing some of the training the dogs received. One of the jurors participated in a training exercise. Several of the jurors went up in the helicopters. Each juror went through the shoot/don't shot exercise that the officers are trained in. The jurors went away from this trip with a clearer understanding of what it takes to become a police officer.
- ❑ Vice Captain Gary Goodwin brought in several different types of drugs to show the jurors, so that we might have a clearer understanding of quantities when deciding about the numerous drug charges brought before us.
- ❑ Judge Gayle Robinson from General Sessions Court came over to explain why a case might be bound over to the grand jury and in general gave the jurors a brief lesson on the judicial system.
- ❑ Trip to Juvenile and Drug Court. The lack of space, inappropriate use of space, the small café, small school space along with poor layout of cells were of a particular concern to the Grand Jury members who toured the facility. Judge Betty Green escorted the Grand Jury members around the facility and gave us a wonderful tour. We also believe the probation officers do a good job. We left the Juvenile Detention Center and went to the Drug Court. This is a wonderful program and is very cost efficient. We were impressed by the facility, personal and Judge Norman. We understand that this program can help stop the cycle of crime helping the offenders to deal with their drug problem.

- Several of the jurors made a trip to the Riverbend Maximum Security facility. The jurors were allowed to tour death row and several other units at the facility. We received a tour of where executions are carried out and could be viewed by the various family members and other officials. It was commented on how well kept the lawns were at the facility and how clean the different units appeared. We also were able to look in on the Tricor Program where death row inmates enter information into databases for Metro Government and other business in the city. Security appeared to be an utmost concern.

Case Load

We heard over 600 this session and have handed down over 600 indictments. We believe the police officers who testified before us were well prepared in most cases. We applaud them for the job they do. The police officers have to deal with things most of the citizens of Davidson County would prefer to never hear about. We especially applaud the officers working in the domestic violence division and in the sex crimes division. As hard as it was for us to hear about crimes committed against children it must be harder to have to deal with it every day. We were fortunate enough to be the grand Jury that heard a case that put a man on the FBI's 10 most wanted list, it was gratifying as a jury when this man was found and turned over to the proper authorities. The job these officers do riding around the low income projects projecting a positive image to the youth living there.

The officers who ride the bicycles have to change out of their uniforms to come testify before us. We recommend that they be able to come before the grand jury in the uniforms they wear while on patrol.

Concerns

We are concerned about the number of high-speed chases that seem to be occurring with more frequency through neighborhoods. These chases put everyone at risk, from the police officers to the private citizen. We hope something can be done about this as police officers risk their lives in so many different ways protecting our city.

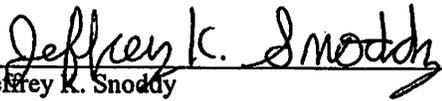
Another concern is that the temporary tags issued for cars are not registered. Cars with these tags can be used in all sorts of criminal activity without any way to track down the owners. It has been pointed out to this Grand Jury about cars being sold at auction to known car thieves and the VIN numbers appearing in other vehicles. We realize these are state issues, but wonder if something can't be done about it.

Our last concern relates to the low bonds on some of the defendants brought into criminal court system. It appeared to us that some of the bonds were too low, especially in cases that had repeat drug offenders and persons charged with sexual crimes against children. There were times we could not understand why such a low bond might have been set for the defendant.

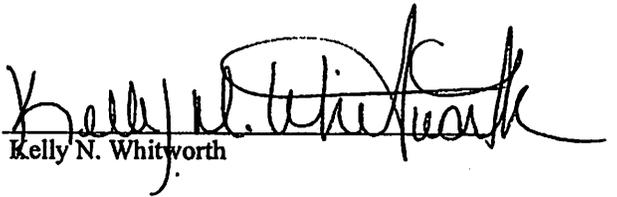

Carrie R. Boucher

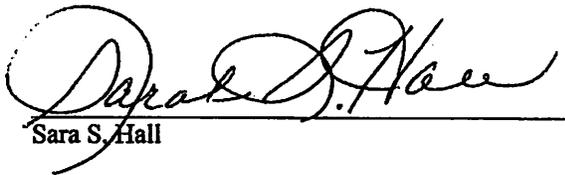

Douglas McDonald

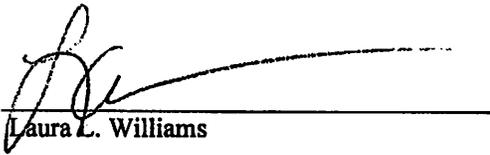

Byron N. Boyd

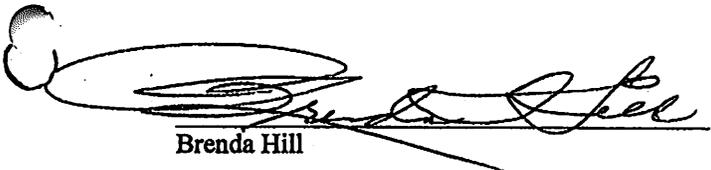

Jeffrey K. Snoddy

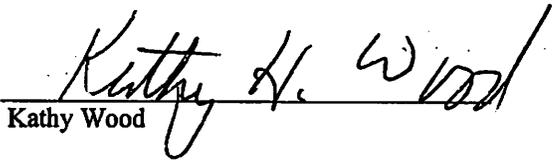

Michael J. Boyd

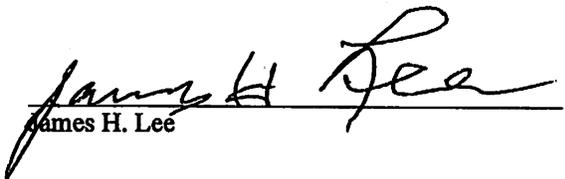

Kelly N. Whitworth

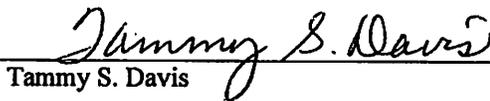

Sara S. Hall

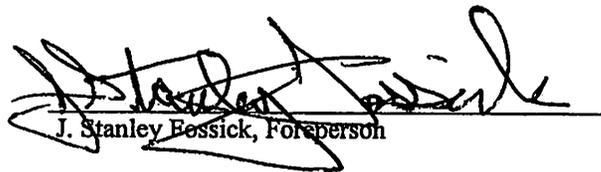

Laura L. Williams


Brenda Hill


Kathy Wood


James H. Lee


Tammy S. Davis


J. Stanley Bossick, Foreperson