

HONORABLE SETH W. NORMAN

Grand Jury Final Report

October 2015 Term

**Grand Jury Final Report
October 2015 Session**

Introduction:

We, the members of the Davidson County Grand Jury, made up of 16 citizens; submit this report at the conclusion of our three month civic duty to Davidson County, Tennessee.

We were honored to be selected for Grand Jury and it was a privilege to perform our civic duty. We have certainly grown to understand how great a responsibility the Grand Jury has to the citizens of Davidson County.

In accordance with the Tennessee Rules of Criminal Procedure, this Grand Jury heard and deliberated upon 647 cases. We presented the court with 644 True Bills and returned 3 No True Bills.

Grand Jury Recommendations:

Shoplifting Cases – Over the course of three months it became clear that shoplifting, specifically repeat misdemeanor offenses, were “weighing” down the docket. It was evident to several on the grand jury that the shoplifters are “winning” and have learned to play the system to only be charged with misdemeanor theft.

We spoke an ADA and learned that state law prohibits adding the multiple charges together to make the misdemeanor a felony.

If at all possible we would appreciate the county to look into the steps to create a Habitual Shoplifting Charge and continue to advocate for the state law charge that would allow for misdemeanor charges to be placed together, reaching felony theft level.

Violent Crime (Guns) – It was commonplace to hear multiple violent crime cases involving guns each day. With homicides in Davidson County nearing an all-time high, we recommend the county take steps to get violent criminals off the streets along with the weapons they wield.

Youth Violence – It was alarming to hear the ages of the suspects in the cases. The majority of homicide cases heard by the grand jury were committed by people under the age of 25, with many under 20. We recommend the county work on youth violence prevention strategies and create programs for the youth of Davidson County to learn more about the dangers of going down the path of least resistance.

Child Abuse Cases – Many of the things we hear can be troubling, but being charged with indicted cases involving children is incredibly difficult. We took our role as Grand Jury very seriously and were ‘bothered’ by the length of time between the incident occurring and it finally reaching Grand Jury for indictment. After hearing a case that was over 3 years old and being told that the lag time was due to “waiting for the victim to die,” we asked to speak with District Attorney Funk.

Although, we appreciate his response and completely understand that much of the “backlog” created happened prior to his tenure. We ask that priority be placed on Child Abuse Cases and that the District Attorney’s office look into adding more staff to work these cases.

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Further, we recommend that the District Attorney's Office, Metro Nashville Police Department and Children Protective Services work on strategies to improve communication between agencies related to Child Abuse Investigations.

Drug Task Force – The Grand Jury was troubled that the Davidson County Drug Task Force was disbanded; we did not see a strategy of how future drug cases were going to be investigated.

Presentations and Field Experiences

Presentations

The Grand Jury received several informational and educational presentations, including representatives from the following:

MNPD Gang Unit
MNPD Children Sex Crimes Unit
MNPD DUI Unit
MNPD Domestic Violence Unit
Our Kids – Sue Ross

The presentations provided us a better understanding of the types of cases we would be hearing during our term.

Special Thank you to District Attorney Glenn Funk and Chief of Police Steve Anderson for the time you took with the Grand Jury.

Field Experiences

Police Academy – We were able to have a Q &A with the training supervisor and all left with a better knowledge of the processes and time commitment necessary to become a police officer in Davidson County. While at the Police Academy we were able to speak to the Bomb Unit, K-9 Unit, and Bomb Squad.

Ride Along – The ride along provided each juror a 'glimpse' into the day to day of a patrol officer.

Com Stat – Those in attendance found Comp Stat to be very informative and appreciated being able to meet the precinct commanders.

Drug Court – The jurors in attendance had an amazing time learning about Drug Court and talking to residents in the program.

Special Thank you to Judge Norman, you are a servant of the community, a true visionary.

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Recognition

Foreperson Stan Fossick

The knowledge and wisdom Stan imparted upon us will never be forgotten. Stan's tireless devotion in continuing to serve his community is to be commended. We appreciate each moment we got to serve with Stan. It was his leadership, guidance and insight that allowed for the proceedings to be carried out in a smooth, efficient manner. It was an honor to serve with Stan and we hope future Grand Jury's have the opportunity to learn from him.

Sergeant Rob Bandish

Thoughtfully prepared and always a delight, we were thankful to have Sgt. Bandish present cases. He has a wealth of knowledge and is an excellent ambassador for MNP. Sgt. Bandish provided detailed information in a concise manner, we will be forever thankful.

Lori Hooberry

Lori Hooberry offered endless assistance and handled much of the administrative duties involved with the Grand Jury.

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Foreperson: Stan Fossick *Stan Fossick*

Grand Jurors:

Gwen Nichols *Gwen Nicholas*

Carol Jones *Carol Jones*

Brian Reed *Brian Reed*

Virginia Thomas *Virginia Thomas*

Derek Smith *Derek Smith*

George Smith *George Smith*

Darrell Arbogast *Darrell Arbogast*

Rebecca Morris *Rebecca Morris*

Theresa M. Brown *Theresa M. Brown*

Alycia Goodson *Alycia Goodson*

Brian Buttrey *Brian Buttrey*

Nicole Hinton *Nicole Hinton*

William L. Winstead III *William L. Winstead III*

Jonathan Miller *Jonathan S. Miller*

Jana Litton *Jana Litton*