
GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT, JULY 2015 TERM

July Term 2015

Submitted to

The Honorable Cheryl Blackburn

Judge, Criminal Court Division III

Davidson County, Tennessee

September 25, 2015

Grand Jury Final Report, July 2015 Term

We, the members of the Grand Jury for the July 2015 term, submit this report at the conclusion of our three month civic duty to Davidson County, Tennessee.

In accordance with the Tennessee Rules of Criminal Procedure, this Grand Jury heard and deliberated upon 756 cases during our three month term. Of those cases, 138 were sealed indictments. This Grand Jury presented the court with 745 True Bills and returned 11 No True Bills. We heard two special presentments during our service. In the case of Patrick Rose (2015-P-3), the Grand Jury did not find enough evidence in the charge of sexual battery. In the case of Jeb Wilson (2015-P-4), the Grand Jury did not find enough evidence that a rape occurred.

We were honored to be selected for jury service and felt privileged to perform this civic duty. We declare our appreciation to those who took time to educate us regarding the law and judicial process. We were prepared for service with special presentations from the following:

- General Michaela Mathews
- Detective Jason Mayo, Child Sex Abuse Unit
- Sue Ross, RN, Our Kids
- Detective Bill Loucks, Drug Task Force
- Detective Jessie Gilliam, Gangs Unit
- Detective Chris Key, Gangs Unit
- Detective Nate Ellsworth, Domestic Violence Unit
- Detective John Jackson, Domestic Violence Unit
- Sergeant Kevin Lovell, DUI Unit
- Lieutenant Jeff Bauer, Warrants Division
- Sergeant Steve Brady, Warrants Division

The Grand Jury appreciates the Assistant District Attorneys Rodney Faulk and Michaela Mathews for their guidance during difficult deliberations. We laud their ability to explain how the law applies in various criminal circumstances.

We thank the District Attorneys' Legal Administrative Assistant Lori Hooberry for scheduling our guest speakers and for maintaining sharp organization of case documents and paperwork. We also thank Donna Draper, Secretary to Judge Blackburn, for ensuring adequate juror staffing and for her tireless availability to accommodate our schedules.

These three months, we heard testimony for hundreds of cases from Sergeant Robert W. Bandish III and Officer Chad Turnbow. We happily give to them our gratitude for their studious preparation before each session and for their succinct and witty presentation.

We compliment Foreman Whit Simpson for his enthusiastic service, leadership, and guidance on the Grand Jury. We give our appreciation to Mr. Simpson for organizing the jury's special outings, for supplying every session with donuts, and for his generosity of treating the jurors to lunch at Monell's following the CompStat outing.

Special Outings

Foreman Whit Simpson arranged several special outings for the members of the Grand Jury that we might gain an in depth understanding of the Davidson County criminal justice system.

Metro Police Training Academy and K-9 Unit

On August 18, 2015, as members of the Grand Jury, we visited the Metro Nashville Davidson County Police Training Academy. There was a class in session when we entered, and we were advised of the course rigor and various types of training being taught. We were informed that cadet training could last between 22 and 24 weeks. After that brief presentation, we were introduced to the Metro Nashville Police Department's gunsmith, Mr. Shelton. He gave us an explanation of his background and history with firearms. We were shown the different types of weapons the department uses and types of weapons seized off the streets of Nashville. Mr. Shelton is a master gunsmith who can rebuild and repair any gun brought to him, including firearms collected from criminals during police work. He stated that his gunsmithing saves taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars annually as it alleviates the department's need to purchase new weapons. After the gunsmith concluded his presentation, the jury was addressed by a training academy instructor who explained the different levels of tactical force used by Metro Police and in what order they are to be used when apprehending a suspect. He further emphasized how officers are taught to deescalate a situation without using force. Additionally, the instructor showed us video footage of the effects drugs have on people and how substances can increase the difficulty of subduing a suspect.

During our visit to the Police Training Academy, we were given a tour of the Aviation Unit facility, as well as an opportunity to take a short flight over Downtown Nashville and the nearby area. The facility was pristine, and all of the helicopters were beautifully kept. We would like to recommend that Metro Nashville invest in more helicopters; of the two modern and faster units, one was temporarily out of commission, really only making one available for emergency use. The four older units are all several decades old, and not as fast.

The same day, the Grand Jury had the privilege of visiting the Metro Davidson County K-9 Unit, located at the Police Training Academy, where we were introduced to officers and their dogs. The dogs are used as the first line of defense in a hostile situation, and during our visit, the K-9 Unit demonstrated tactics the dogs use when they are deployed. The dogs are taught to have a great deal of discipline and to know when to react to commands by their handlers. The dogs are paired with only one handler during their career and are given the necessary training they need in order to sniff out narcotics and to locate and apprehend suspects. A dog's career can last between eight and ten years, and once they retire, they go home with their handler. There have been only two dogs killed in the line of duty, and they are buried in the police pet cemetery.

We thank everyone at the Police Training Academy for taking time to educate us on the high level of training and tactical skills imparted to our Metro Police Officers; we thank the Metro Aviation Unit for giving us an informative aerial tour of our city; and we thank the Metro K-9 Unit for an exciting demonstration of skill, training, and discipline.

Riverbend Maximum Security Prison

On September 10, 2015, the grand jury was invited to tour the Riverbend Maximum Security Prison. We were given a very informative tour by Mr. Hayes and Corporal Hicks. The jury visited several areas of the prison including Death Row and received a first-hand look at the daily activities of prison inmates. This visit gave the grand jury insight into the responsibility of carrying out sentences as we deliberated the merits of each case.

We found the prison to be very clean, and we learned that the inmates are able to take classes in woodworking, leather craft and various other trades offered from Watkins College. The inmates have opportunities to further their education, and if an inmate does not hold a high school diploma, he can earn his GED. The visit was very informative, and we would like to thank the court for giving us this opportunity.

Police Ride-Along

A wonderfully educational experience for the Grand Jurors was the ride-along shift with a Metro police officer. The officers taught us how calls are received and handled, such as responding to notifications by level of emergency, using the cruisers' on-board computer system. We witnessed how police officers use their training to handle various calls, such as offenders on the highway, burglaries, and scenes of domestic violence, finishing each incident with a detailed report. Most impressive was the level of courtesy and professionalism we observed our Metro officers show to everyone with whom they made contact. Each of us who participated in a ride-along attests to the excellence of the Metro Nashville Police Department, and we are proud of the work done by our law enforcement.

CompStat Meeting

On Friday, September 18, 2015, the Grand Jury traveled to the North Nashville police precinct to attend the weekly Computer Statistics, or CompStat, meeting. All precincts of the Metro Nashville Police Department attend this assembly, and leadership from each zone presents their respective area's progress in crime prevention for a specified period and strategies for improvement for the weeks ahead. Projected onto a large screen is a map of Davidson County which is divided into eight precincts. Each area uses green and red color coding to identify goals met and zones that require progress. Icons that indicate specific crimes also appear on the map in locations where that particular crime is concentrated. The CompStat program provides data tracking for each crime category. Metro Police use this data to formulate strategies to reduce the incidence of criminal activity in our county.

Special Case

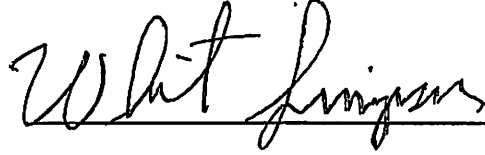
On the morning of Monday, September 21, 2015, the Honorable John Jay Hooker addressed the Grand Jury from his wheel chair. He has stage four terminal cancer and wanted to speak to us about "Death with Dignity" in Tennessee. He is currently undergoing experimental drug therapy which has intense side effects. He asked for the support of the Grand Jury to request the Tennessee State Legislature to grant a terminally ill citizen the "Liberty" to end his or her life with the assistance of a willing physician.

This Grand Jury overwhelmingly supports Mr. Hooker's desire to have the laws of Tennessee amended to permit a severely ill patient to have the OPTION to end his or her life, thus ending all the pain and suffering for the patient and his or her family.


Recommendations

We recommend a preparatory outline be created to assist future witnesses in organizing their cases before presentment to the Grand Jury. We especially enjoyed the direct, detailed, and concise method used by Sergeant Bandish, and we recommend that he be consulted for the creation of such an outline.

Respectfully submitted on September 25, 2015 by the Grand Jury, July 2015 Term



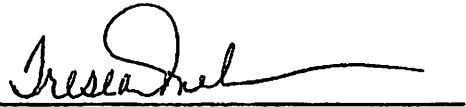
Whit Simpson, Foreman



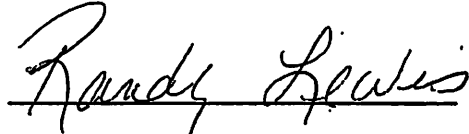
Rita Abeyta



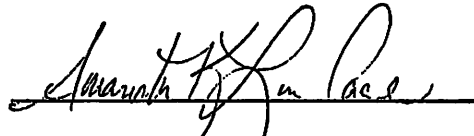
Amber Brown



Tresa Donelson



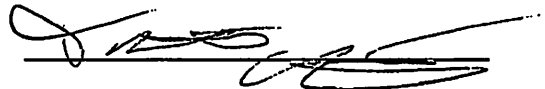
Randy Lewis



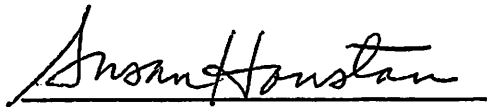
Amanda Lovelace



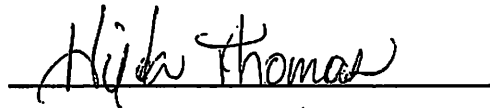
Ella Haynie



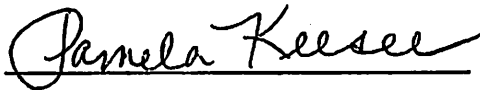
Tristan Majors



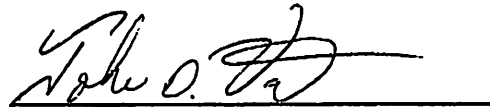
Susan Houston



Hilda Thomas



Pamela Keesee



John Vogt



Tatika Jones



Brian Watkins