

Davidson County Grand Jury
July Term
(July 8th - September 18th)
Criminal Court Division I
Judge Steve Dozier

Our term began on July 8th and continued until September 18th of 2025.

Our panel was given 1042 cases in total to deliberate, discuss, and decided on a true bill. We heard a wide variety of cases, like theft of property, drunk driving, sexual assault, domestic violence, and child sexual abuse and neglect. We returned a true bill on 1040 of these cases and 2 no true bills.

This experience would not have been as positive without the leadership of our foreperson, Mr. Parker Toler. Mr. Toler demonstrated not only a strong understanding of the legal system and its processes but also a deep knowledge of Nashville itself. His years of dedication to the city through public service were evident throughout our sessions. It was clear that he holds both this city and the grand jury process in the highest regard. His guidance and professionalism made him a vital part of our grand jury experience.

Sgt. Spencer was another valuable asset to our time on the Grand Jury. In his role as liaison, he was responsible for presenting a large number of cases each day. Despite the volume of material, each presentation was delivered with clarity and precision. He consistently stated the facts in a straightforward manner, which allowed us to focus on the key details without distraction. His professionalism and concise delivery not only made the process more efficient but also helped us approach each case with a clear understanding of the information presented.

As part of the jury duty process in Davidson County, we were allowed to hear from presenters who specialized in different areas of the criminal justice system. These presentations were especially valuable because they provided important context and background information about certain types of crimes, such as domestic violence and sexual assault. Hearing directly from experts helped us better understand the complexities of these cases—whether it was the psychological impact on victims, the challenges in evidence collection, or the legal nuances that may not be immediately obvious to those outside the field. The presenters also created a space where we could ask questions, which gave us a clearer understanding of how the law is applied in these situations. This additional insight was instrumental in helping us make more informed decisions during deliberations, as we approached the cases with greater awareness and sensitivity.

Another key part of the jury duty experience was the field trip to the Behavioral Health Center. This visit was both informational and impactful, as it gave us a hands-on opportunity to see how

the justice system works in connection with community support services. Rather than simply hearing about available resources, we were able to observe firsthand the role the Behavioral Health Center plays in addressing mental health needs and providing alternatives that support rehabilitation rather than solely punishment. This experience highlighted how the justice system can collaborate with community programs to promote recovery, reduce recidivism, and offer individuals a path forward.

Concerns of the Grand Jury:

Felony Gun Charges

Cases involving felony gun charges were somewhat repetitive, and at times, it felt as though these cases were treated as routine. While we understand the volume and frequency of such cases, it raises the question of how the justice system can more effectively prevent guns from ending up in the hands of felons. Exploring additional measures, such as stricter monitoring, better tracking systems, or increased community education, could help reduce these offenses and enhance public safety.

Theft of Merchandise

One area that stood out to us was the inconsistency we noticed in charges related to theft of merchandise, burglary, and organized crime. At times, we were left trying to clarify why certain individuals were charged with one offense rather than another, which created some confusion. It might be helpful in the future to provide jurors with a printed reference sheet that clearly defines the distinctions between these charges, so that we can more easily understand the reasoning behind them. Additionally, we observed that theft of merchandise cases—particularly those involving amounts under \$1,000—took up a significant portion of our time. We felt that these cases could be more effectively addressed in General Sessions Court, allowing the Grand Jury to focus on more complex matters.

Sexual Assault & SA Bond Inconsistencies

Another issue we noticed during our time on the Grand Jury was the inconsistency in bonds for sexual assault cases. In some instances, bonds appeared to be set in ways that did not align with the seriousness of the charges, which raised concerns for us as jurors. These inconsistencies made it difficult to understand how bond amounts were determined and whether they reflected both the severity of the offense and the need to protect the community.

We also listened to cases involving children where it appeared that parents were aware of their partner's history as a sexual offender, yet still placed their children in situations that could have been avoided. As jurors, this was especially troubling to hear. We felt strongly that in circumstances where a parent knowingly exposes their child to such risks, they should also be held accountable and charged with child endangerment. This would not only emphasize the seriousness of parental responsibility but also serve as a safeguard to better protect children from preventable harm.

Domestic Violence

A significant number of domestic violence cases were presented to us during this session, and they raised many concerns. First, there should be a clearer way to establish whether a domestic violence charge is a first, second, or third offense. This distinction is important for ensuring that repeat offenders are held appropriately accountable. Second, we felt that when domestic violence is committed in the presence of children, there should be a higher charge or enhanced sentencing. Research shows that witnessing domestic violence can have serious psychological consequences for children, including low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, behavioral problems, delinquency, bullying, and even self-directed violence (Office of Justice Programs). By acknowledging the lasting impact on children, the justice system can better address the broader harm caused by domestic violence and strengthen protections for vulnerable family members.

Drones

We also had the opportunity to hear from Chief of Police John Drake and District Attorney Glenn Funk, who each spoke with us separately. District Attorney Funk spoke enthusiastically about the potential use of drones and the positive impact they could have on response times within the city. When Chief Drake addressed us, he expanded on this topic, explaining the many ways drones could be used to combat crime and strengthen community safety. While we do not know the exact steps needed to move this initiative forward, we felt that if the idea were presented to the public in the same clear and informative way it was presented to us, there could be strong public support for implementing drones as a tool for law enforcement.

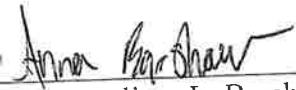
Crime Lab Presentation

One day, we had a representative from the crime lab present to us about the functions of the lab. The presentation was incredibly informative, and it was clear that the representative was very knowledgeable about the lab's operations and passionate about their work. However, the presentation was quite lengthy and included details we felt were unnecessary, such as the number of employees in each department and the current hiring needs for those departments. At


approximately 82 slides, the presentation became somewhat overwhelming. While the information was valuable, we felt it could be streamlined to focus on the most relevant points for the jury.

Grand Jury Report
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July 8, 2025 – September 26, 2025
Panel Members



Parker Toler, Foreperson


Annaliese L. Barshaw


Tyjah M. Cooper

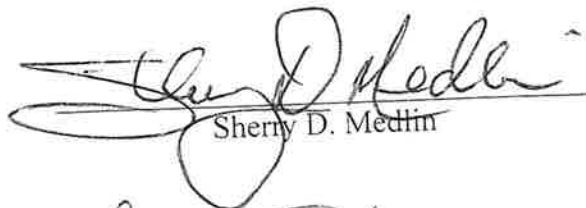

Catharine L. DeLuca


Katherine B. Edwards


Nicklaus D. Flemister


Lauren E. Lineberger


Jason A. Mays, Sr.


Sherry D. Medlin


Susan R. Navaro


Olivia H. Patridge


James JP Puryear, Jr.

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Alternate Panel Members

Mimi B. Arthur

Hannah M. Baughn

Susan B. George

Thomas B. Kaul

Linda R. Koon
Linda R. Koon

Warren J. Lovelace

Staci R. Turner

Tiffany C. Widener

Elizabeth E. Williams

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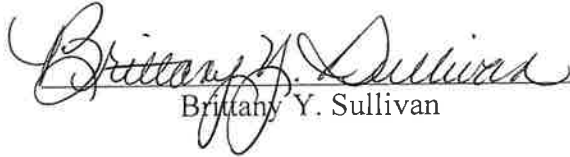
Panel Members



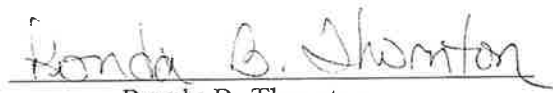
Chantelle S. Smith



Charles A. Smith



Brittany Y. Sullivan



Ronda B. Thornton