

REPORT OF THE CONCURRENT GRAND JURY

APRIL 24, 2013

Presented to

The Honorable Rebecca Stern

Judge, Criminal Court

Division II

Hamilton Country, Tennessee

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Judge Stern:

The Concurrent Grand Jury for the January-April, 2013 term presents the following report:

This Grand Jury would like to say what an eye-opening experience this has been. Many say they will not look at their community the same as they did before their term began. This experience has made them more aware of things that go on in many parts of Chattanooga which, in turn, has given them a new out-look on the Criminal Justice System.

They leave with a renewed respect for our law enforcement officers and the sacrifice they make for our community. The Grand Jurors feel that so often the work they do is taken for granted. The knowledge they received left one Grand Juror with more sympathy after hearing the news that an officer had been shot in the line of duty.

They were given a glimpse into the prosecution of criminals that the average citizen does not have knowledge of. They heard testimony from various law enforcement officers detailing the initiation of stops, how search warrants are served and the investigations of crimes such as robberies and murder.

During their term, they were given opportunity to hear from all three of our Criminal Court Judges. As they shared with us the many things that they are tasked with, it was easy to see the passion they have for the law they were sworn to uphold. As most of our cases involve drugs, it is uplifting to hear of Judge Stern's Drug Court. The Grand Jury feels this intensive program is worth the federal grant money that is used to run it.

They were given an overview of Sessions Court by one of their Judges, which was very beneficial as this is where our cases come from. To help them better understand the cases involving drugs and alcohol, they were shown by a DUI officer how he administers the field sobriety test and given an "education" on drugs by two City Narcotic Investigators.

This Grand Jury is made up of employees of Hunt Nissan, Chattem Inc., McKee Foods Corp., Koch Foods, Blue Cross Blue Shield, as well as a Recycling Specialist, a self-employed Court Reporter and a Director of an Assisted Living facility; and of course, we cannot forget our five retired Jurors. All of whom feel that the time spent away from their jobs and retirement activities was worth the sacrifice. They feel everyone should serve when given the opportunity.

It was part of our responsibility to tour Silverdale CCA., Juvenile Detention Center, the County Jail and listen to a presentation on Community Correction. We have been charged with sharing our opinions on Silverdale CCA., and Community Corrections.

During their term this Grand Jury heard 776 cases and it is with great respect that we submit this report:

SILVERDALE (CCA)

We were guided through our tour by Superintendent Tommy Standifer and Assistant Warden Christmas. Upon arrival we were greeted with professionalism and openness as to what the facility is all about and what it takes to run it.

The level of professionalism by staff was high throughout the facility. Since changing procedure and having inmates stand at their cells or bunks, as if ready for inspection, our tour was easier on those Grand Jurors who were a bit apprehensive about the experience.

As always, Grand Jurors were very impressed with the cleanliness and general upkeep of the facility. They were pleased to learn that inmate labor was used for said cleanliness as well as doing laundry and preparing the meals. We are glad to learn that they are required to work but also appreciate the savings to the taxpayer such use of labor must provide.

There seemed to be adequate staff and correctional officers to handle the population the day we toured (3/18).

The kitchen appeared to be sufficient to prepare meals for the inmates. As with most Grand Juries in the past, we feel three hot meals a day is not necessary to run the facility effectively. Many hard working citizens of this county work multiple jobs, manage their households and families and don't have the luxury of three hot meals a day.

The medical staff seemed very competent to meet the medical needs, both physical and mental, of the inmates. Having said that, the bill the county receives for the facilities prescription drugs is high and hard for the taxpayer to hear.

The educational programs that are provided for the inmates are essential as we know some may not have the opportunity otherwise. We would like to see that all inmates not having a high school diploma be required to take the GED at least once before their release. We feel the need for programs that show inmates how to search out employment and perhaps even give resources for that purpose are of great importance in potentially helping inmates not fall back into the same cycle of crime.

In the fact that it helps control the flow of contraband in the facility, having video visitation is a useful tool. We would like to see an expansion of this technology to further help in the reduction of transporting inmates to court.

As he will be retiring this summer, we would like to take this opportunity to say "Thank You" to Superintendent Tommy Standifer. Your professionalism and kindness to Grand Juries as they tour the facility has always been of the highest level. Thank you, sir, for your years of service to the county.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

We believe Chris Jackson from Community Corrections gave us a good overall view of the program.

We feel these alternative programs keep non-violent offenders out of our already crowded jails and are thankful for the savings to the taxpayer this form of punishment provides.

We feel that when an individual wants to change the direction of their life, taking advantage of this opportunity and following the rules can be a good start.

We learned that road side trash pick-up by those individuals sentenced to community service is a great savings to the tax-payer. We would like to see this program expand to other areas of the community that need clean up.

After hearing what little security is in place at the Community Corrections building, we feel that security should be higher. We feel that security scanners

should be installed in order to catch any weapons that could be brought in by an unhappy individual that might want to cause harm to those they report to.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Since legislation was passed in 2012 requiring that a car brought to a scrap yard be 12 years or older and adding a 3 business day holding period, the number of those cases coming through the Grand Jury has significantly dropped. Although we feel that is a step in the right direction, more has to be done. Often times even if the car is retrieved from the scrap yard due to the holding period, for the victim of this crime it is still too late. For a car to be scrapped it requires "prepping" which means stripping it of vital parts. Even if the car is tracked before it is crushed the owner is left with the responsibility of repairing it. Many of the vehicle owners cannot afford the new parts or labor and often times due to the age of the car, those parts are no longer made or hard to find. It seems simple to most Grand Juries, no matter the age of the vehicle, proper documentation showing ownership or transfer should be required.

As in the past, this grand Jury is astounded by the number of DUI cases, many being third and fourth offenses, that we hear. Obviously, there is no easy answer but we know that the average citizen does not realize the consequences of the first offense DUI. As we know there are several public service announcements running such as "Booze it and lose it", we would like to see a PSA that focuses on such mandatory consequences. Perhaps if more people were made aware of this they would make proper arrangements when out drinking.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

We would like to suggest that any law enforcement officer be required to keep their weight under check. While serving on our term we noticed law enforcement as well as correctional officers that seemed more than just a little over weight. We believe their safety as well as the citizens they serve is at jeopardy when they are out of shape.

As in juries past, we would like to ask for a larger van to transport Grand Juries to their facility tours. The existing van does not properly hold everyone.

We would like to suggest that Grand Jury terms be changed from four to three months. Four months makes it more of a burden to those that have normal Monday through Friday employment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following people:

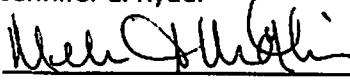
- Judges Poole, Stern and Steelman for sharing their knowledge and passion for upholding the law. They give so much to the Criminal Court. We appreciate them for all they do.
- Sessions Court Judge Christie Sell, for sharing with us information pertaining to the inner workings of Sessions Court.
- Assistant D.A. Bill West for his legal assistance. Your knowledge of the law was imperative to our service. The patience you showed in answering our many questions was greatly appreciated.
- Court Liaison Officer SGT. Kevin Akin of the Chattanooga Police Department and Sheriff's Deputy Wayne Dewell for getting our witnesses in and organized.
- Sheriff's Deputy Ike Clarkson for escorting us on our facility tours.
- Paula Thompson and staff of the Circuit Court Clerk's Office; Aaliyah Hakeem of the Criminal Court Clerk's Office and Jury Clerk Stormi Rogers. We appreciate everything you do for us.
- The administration and staff who conducted our tours through Silverdale, County Jail and Juvenile Detention Center.
- Mr. Chris Jackson from Community Corrections for sharing information about his programs.
- Narcotics Investigator Alex Lopez and Lee Wolff for educating us on the many drugs that we hear about in our cases. We were given a great deal of information. We appreciate all the investigators for the work they do to fight what sometimes must seem like a losing battle.
- Lt. Coppinger for his interesting class on safety in the jail.
- Jim Hughes and his staff for the lunch served to us in the County Jail. As always it was tasty and much appreciated.
- Paula Thompson for providing, in her budget, our lunch at Cracker Barrel while touring the facilities. This is much appreciated and not taken for granted.
- Jennifer Ryder for serving as our official note taker.
- Our subs Sara Mak and Jerry McClanahan.

Respectfully submitted,

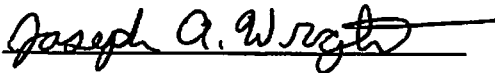
Concurrent Grand Jury



Jennifer E. Ryder



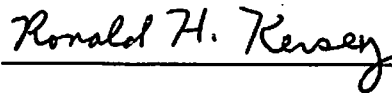
Melisa A. Mathis



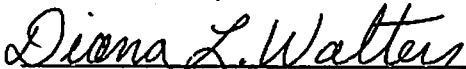
Joseph A. Wright



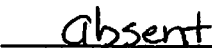
Max G. Cromer



Ronald H. Kersey



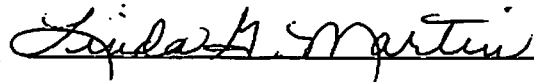
Diana L. Walters



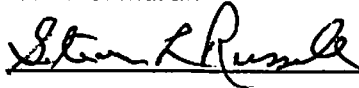
Claudia M. Nielsen



Norvel R. Williams



Linda G. Martin



Steven L. Russell



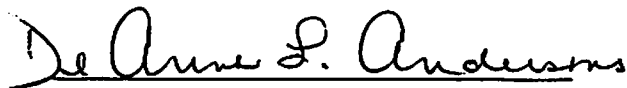
Charles A. Tyler



Daniel L. Peterson



Earnie C. Williams



DeAnna L. Anderson, Grand Jury Foreperson