

Grand Jury Report

September – October 2014

“WE THE JURY”

Sitting in a courtroom and hearing your name being called to serve on the Grand Jury can be a very intimidating occurrence when you don't know what to expect. The experience has been educational and interesting, nonetheless. As a group, we have heard cases from perjury to theft to murder. Some days it feels like we are back in our childhood, pretending to be lawyers. With all of the jargon we've had to learn and statutes we must take into consideration, it can sometimes be overwhelming.

Over the last 60 days, we have gotten to see just how much work goes into each and every case brought before the Grand Jury. All of the police work and deliberations amongst the attorneys and judges is difficult to see from the outside. As citizens, we only get so much information when charges are being brought against someone. The newspapers do not do justice to those involved. It is incredible to see how the whole justice system works and just how unprejudiced it truly is. Lynn Pryor is always open to questions and other legitimate possibilities when discussing a case. This is quite refreshing when most of what you hear is about the justice system unfairly attacking innocent people.

On the other hand, we have also noticed a couple of things that we feel deserve more attention and thought than they may be getting. One major topic we have talked about is shock probation. To our understanding, the purpose of shock probation is to release someone convicted of a crime in hopes that the time they have served “shocks” them into turning their life around. This sounds like a genuinely good idea to give people a second chance. Let's face it, no one is perfect. Sometimes people do make mistakes and just need a good wake up call. However, we have seen several previously convicted people presented to our Grand Jury that have served time before and have been shock probated more than once. It would seem to us that if these people were not turned around by time served in the past or already had a chance at shock probation, then it should be evident that the whole purpose has been lost on them.

Likewise, we have seen some things that don't make sense with releasing inmates on GPS monitoring devices. While this is an efficient and controlled way to release someone from jail, some people do not appreciate the effort being made to help them. When an inmate cuts his monitoring device off and is put back in jail, would it then be a good idea to give them yet another monitoring device to take advantage of? We think not. These sorts of actions are what cause the community to call into question the integrity of our judicial system. We would like to see that turned around so that Christian County residents can feel safer and more secure in the fact that the system is working for them, not against them.

Upon closing out our duties on the Grand Jury, we are leaving with a wealth of new knowledge. We will now be able to construct a better informed opinion on matters in the community and in politics. We will also realize, when reading or watching the news, that we do not ever have the whole story behind a crime committed. We won't rush to judgment on those in the spotlight or crucify someone just because Channel 5 says "they did it".

We would like to say thank you to Lynn, Tara, Michael, Judge Atkins, all of the police officers, detectives, troopers and investigators, and anyone else we have had the pleasure of crossing paths with, for taking the time to help us understand the law a little bit better and providing us with the opportunity to serve our community in a positive way.

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SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER GRAND JURY