

OTHER GRAND JURY ACTIVITIES

GRAND JURY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Grand Jury Review Committee did not become active until several months into its term. During that time we observed that panel members had trouble using the existing Grand Jury Manual. Confusion relating to indictments was particularly notable. Later conflict and confusion relating to the government oversight function seemed to suggest the need to update and revise the manual.

A request was sent to 13 counties of similar size and characteristic for their Grand Jury manuals; eight counties responded. The result was a wealth of constructive ideas and reconfirmation of much of what was in the existing manual. Perhaps the most significant change was to issue separate manuals for the government oversight and indictment functions.

In discussions with the District Attorney's office it was agreed the Orange County Indictment Manual would serve as a model for Ventura County. The District Attorney then assumed responsibility for editing and publishing a new Ventura County Grand Jury Indictment Manual; we believe the results are commendable.

Our revisions of the general manual are significant and we believe are a substantial improvement. It became apparent we could not address every potential Grand Jury operational issue, so what was addressed seemed to be that which we thought most important. Subsequent Grand Juries should re-evaluate the priorities to keep the Grand Jury Manual an effective tool for smooth Grand Jury operation

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dorothy Engel - Chair

Diane L. Anderson

Roger Fanter

John Murray

EDITORIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Serving on the Editorial Review Committee proved to be a challenging assignment. Our focus was on reviewing reports for adherence to approved scope, logical construction, sentence structure, word usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Substance was the responsibility of the committees conducting the investigation. The result is a quality Grand Jury Final Report.

We prepared a set-back schedule early in our term to determine deadlines to assure timely completion of the Final Report which was useful in setting priorities. In addition to editorial review, the committee was responsible for publishing the Final Report, which included choosing print style, format, covers, binding, paper, and coordination of the production function.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Betty M. Leisenring, Co-chair

John Murray , Co-chair

Diane L. Anderson

Ron Andrews

Dorothy Engel

Deshay Ford

Edward Millan

GRAND JURY OVERSIGHT HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Early in our term there was discussion on how to identify civil oversight needs and opportunities. An ad hoc committee was appointed which decided that an absence of prior Grand Jury oversight could be one of the criteria used to initiate a review of county government agencies.

INQUIRY

Grand Jury Final Reports for 1991/92 through 1995/96 were analyzed. Reports vary greatly in detail and specificity so it was decided that if a problem or issue was clearly stated, irrespective of the depth of inquiry, that the report was representative of grand jury oversight.

The 1995/96 Ventura County government organization chart was used to identify the agencies that might be considered for oversight. A color code for each year's Final Report was placed on the chart to show which agencies had been reviewed, then was enlarged and mounted for display. The following information summarizes the results of that analysis.

FIVE YEAR HISTORY OF GRAND JURY OVERSIGHT

Agency	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96
Board of Supervisors	X	X			
Assessor				X	
Auditor/Controller			X		
Clerk & Recorder	X	X			X
Treas./Tax Collector					X
District Attorney	X				
Sheriff	X	X			
Court Exec. Officer					
County Counsel					
Chief Admin. Officer			X		
Health Care Agency	X	X			X
Public Works					
General Services	X	X	X	X	X
Public Defender		X			
Correction Services		X			
Resource Management	X	X	X		X
Fire Protection		X			
Library Services		X	X		
Public Soc. Services	X		X		
UC Coop. Extension		X			

FIVE YEAR HISTORY OF GRAND JURY OVERSIGHT (continued)

Agency	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96
Personnel/Human Resources	X	X			X
Information Systems				X	X
Animal Regulation		X			
Ag. Commissioner			X		
Airports			X		
Area Agency on Aging					

CONCLUSIONS

- The enhanced organization and individual agency charts (also color coded) provided a visual display. They assisted the panel in quickly pinpointing county agencies that have not been investigated, or that needed to be revisited.
- A few agencies appear to have escaped review and some reviews were limited in scope. For example, inquiries into the Health Care Agency have focused on the Drunk Driver Education Program, a source of frequent citizen complaint. The Public Works Agency has escaped review except for land disposal site evaluations. In general, this data motivated the 1996/97 Grand Jury to conduct oversight over several agencies that had not been considered in the past.

RECOMMEDATIONS

1. Subsequent grand juries should continue this evaluation, perhaps in more detail, with cities and special districts included.
2. Subsequent grand juries should add to or amend this exhibit and use it for orientation of incoming panels.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Community Relations Committee focuses on conveying an understanding of the commitments and responsibilities of the Grand Jury to the communities of Ventura County. We accomplished this by having an open house for the news media and public. The committee issued press releases and letters to the editors. A Speakers Bureau was established to address organizations in Ventura County explaining the functions of the Grand Jury and to encourage service on the Grand Jury.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Roger E. Fanter, Chair

Randy Bowin

Albert Ginn

Harvey Harper

Jessica Harris

Mervyn Heal

Dorothy Intlekofer

COMPLAINT REVIEW COMMITTEE

As of June 1, 1997, the Complaint Review Committee had received eighty-seven complaints involving county, municipal, school districts, special districts, private and quasi-public organizations.

Complaints must be signed by the complainant, dated, and indicate a valid return address and phone number. We were unable to process some of the complaints because they lacked some of the above information.

All of the complaints received were analyzed, and most were then referred to the appropriate action committee for processing.

There were twenty-seven complaints that resulted in full investigations. Of these, six were included as part of the Grand Jury Final Report.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Edward J. Millan, Chair

Ronald Andrews

Antonio Caballero

Harvey Harper

Betty Leisenring

Florence Young

INDICTMENT SUMMARY

As of June 1, 1997:

Total Number of Indictments — 5

Total Number of Days Assigned to Indictments — 15

Subject matter of Indictments:

Murder	4
Robbery	1
Carjacking	1
Kidnaping	2