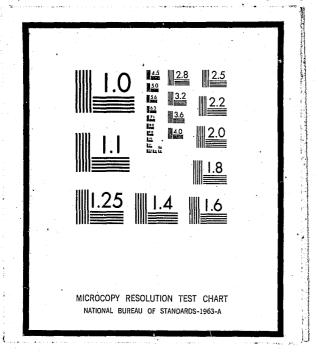
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Annotated Bibliography No on the Grand Jury

An American Judicature Society

Research Study

by Jeffrey Lubbers

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THE GRAND JURY

[Note: The bibliography contained herein represents a substantial updating of a bibliography published by the Society in 1968.]

Since 1968, many new articles have been written about the role of the grand jury in our criminal justice system. The tenor of these articles is quite different from most of the earlier ones; particularly noticeable is the rising concern about the rights of witnesses who are called to testify before grand juries.

The grand jury is an institution of ancient common law origin. Its historic function has been to provide security to the innocent against hasty, malicious or oppressive prosecution - to act as a shield between the accused and his accusers. However, in recent years the institution has been under attack. Initially, it was criticized as being an expensive rubber stamp for the prosecutor (an argument which won out in England, the country of its birth, where it was abolished in 1933). Now, in the United States, the grand jury has come under renewed attack, especially at the federal level.

In the federal system and in 24 of our states, 1 no person may be charged with commission of a felony except by indictment returned by a legally constituted grand jury. To complement its indicting function, grand juries in some states often exercise their power to investigate independently, within the boundaries of the community, any public offenses that may have been committed, in order to determine where the responsibility rests and whether any indictments should issue. Whether or not anyone is indicted, the grand jury often issues a report -often referred to as a "presentment"- on its investigation.

Although most state grand juries have the power to issue reports and investigate on their own, they have become generally passive bodies of late. As a rule, the grand jury investigation is confined to the jury room. There is almost complete reliance on the prosecutor to determine the subject matter, to determine the question presented to witnesses, and to provide general direction of the investigation he has initiated.

As the prosecutorial influence increased, and as the scope of federal criminal law expanded into regulation of business, fighting organized crime, and suppressing perceived political conspiracies, federal grand jury investigations often have become wide-ranging, coordinated interrogations of suspected citizens. The most well-known example of this is the campaign against political dissidents by the Internal Security Division of the Justice Department, which has utilized the grand jury as an

offensive weapon by giving witnesses the choice of answering very detailed questions about their life and associations or going to jail for the length of the grand jury (up to 18 months). Some of these investigations have been widely publicized, and the tactics of the prosecution have led many to question the fairness of many of the laws relating to witnesses called before a grand jury.

The grand jury witness is, in a real sense, at the mercy of the prosecutors. The witness may be ordered to appear by a subpoena, which, unlike subpoenas used in other proceedings, does not disclose the nature of the proceedings, nor the questions which that person will be asked. In a federal proceeding, the prosecutor may summon anyone in the nation to testify at the investigation without having to make any showing whatsoever that he has any reason to believe that the witness has relevant information.

Once in the jury room, the witness is confronted with as many as 23 jury members and one or more prosecuting attorneys. No judge is permitted to be present, nor is the witness permitted to have his lawyer inside the room with him. The defense lawyer in the "Harrisburg Vll" and "Ellsberg" cases, Leonard Boudin, points to this as most significant.

The witness must submit to virtually unlimited grand jury questioning with respect to criminal matters, his constitutional rights endangered, without the benefit of counsel. Our society has no comparable institution which sanctions such interpogations of a person "legally" denied counsel.²

The witness is allowed to leave the room to confer with his lawyer in the hall, but even this gives the prosecutor an opportunity, if he wishes, to make insinuations before the grand jury.

Another important issue concerns the granting of immunity from prosecution to a witness to require him to testify. The theory is that the witness no longer needs (nor may he invoke) his Fifth Amendment right to refuse to testify if he cannot be prosecuted for what he says. The old style of immunity was "transactional immunity", whereby the witness could not be prosecuted for any action of his connected with the transaction about which he testified. In 1970, Congress amended federal law to create "use immunity", which means that the government may not use the witness' testimony against him in any way, but may still prosecute him for a crime relating to his testimony if the prosecutor can show that the evidence against him was derived from an independent source. Use immunity was recently held constitutional by the United States Supreme Court.3 Consequently, the reluctant witness is now confronted with an even more perplexing dilemma.

As a corollary to this, immunity is often not enough for those who prize the confidentiality of their contacts, such as newsmen or scholars. In June, 1972, in a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that Earl Caldwell, a newsman covering the Black Panther Party, would have to answer questions before a San Francisco grand jury. In so doing, the court refused to give legal recognition to a "newsman's privilege." The Caldwell decision has caused much consternation among lawyers and journalists. As one commentator put it:

For many journalists and scholars, the issue is plain: To obey the Supreme Court decision is to violate crucial professional ethics and to jeopardize not only one's livelihood, but also the public's right to know...[I]t's suddenly clear that a good story can now lead to prison rather than a Pulitzer.5

Finally, in many states, there is no guarantee that a grand jury will not issue a report (as opposed to an indictment) which could be damaging to the witness' reputation or career. Inevitably, these issues are tainted by politics, since many critics who deplore the use of such strategy against political dissidents recognize its utility in breaking down organized crime. This contradiction has added more fuel to the fire.

The fire always burns hottest when politics are involved, but there are some other areas of controversy, which are the subject of many of the newer articles and case notes:

- Are grand juries representative of the entire community?
- Should a defendant have access to a transcript of all grand jury testimony which the prosecution plans to use against him at trial? Should he at least have access to his own testimony?
- Should recordation of all testimony be mandatory?
- May a witness refuse to answer questions derived from illegal wiretaps? Of someone else's phones?
- May a person be indicted on the basis of evidence that would be inadmissable at trial?
- Should the grand jury be provided with an attorney and staff which are independent of the prosecutor's office?

- Can blood samples, handwriting exemplars, or voiceprints be compelled by grand juries?
- What role should the supervising judge play?

A few commentators call for the abolition of the grand jury (a constitutional amendment would be required at the federal level), while some simply want to abolish its indicting function. Still others want to eliminate its investigative function, Most agree that some reform is necessary.

Grand juries are likely to be surrounded by controversy for years to come. Whether they can be called "juries", whether they are, in fact, still the "people's panel", or whether they have become an arm of the prosecutor are not technical legal questions. The attempts to reconcile these questions should be of interest to everyone.

FOOTNOTES

The source of these statistics was Dash, "The Indicting Grand Jury: A Critical Stage?" 10 Am. Crim. L. Rev. 807, 812 fn. 24 (1972). In 15 states the defendant may waive indictment in at least some types of cases.

²Boudin, "The Federal Grand Jury," 61 <u>Georgetown L.J.</u> 1, 3 (1972).

3Kastigar v. U.S., 405 U.S. 441 (1972).

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END