

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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A STUDY OF BOARD OF
PAROLE WARRANTS

by

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BOARD OF PAROLE WARRANTS

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Between 1 January 1966 and 1 October 1967 the District of Columbia Board of Parole was responsible for the issuance of 123 warrants for the arrest of releasees under the supervision of the Board. Of the 123, there were 61 who were good-time releasees and 62 who were parolees. All of these releasees had been released from D. C. Department of Corrections facilities - 115 from the Reformatory for Men, five from the Jail, and three from the Reformatory for Women. The Board issued an additional eight warrants for releasees from other jurisdictions who had been transferred to the supervision of the D. C. Board. These eight cases are not considered in this analysis.

The issuance of a warrant is not exactly equivalent to a revocation of releasee status. After the warrant is issued and the releasees have been taken into custody, he may be given an opportunity to appear before the Board to ask for a continuation of his releasee status. This is a legal right, and he may be represented by an attorney at this hearing. There is nothing

in the record to indicate how many of this group had availed themselves of this opportunity. However, in 115 of the 123 cases the releasee status was revoked. The disposition of the remaining eight cases is somewhat uncertain, but it appears that in four cases the whereabouts of the releasees are unknown and in two cases the releasee was in custody in another jurisdiction.

As is indicated in Table 1, the warrant releasees were predominantly Negro males and, as is indicated in Table 2, the median age was 38.5 years. Just over half, 50.4 percent, were single, as is noted in Table 3. The parolee group had a substantially higher proportion of those who were married, 22.5 percent, as compared with 9.8 percent for the good-time releasees. As is indicated in Table 4, about one-third of the group had been sentenced for crimes against the person such as assault and robbery, another one-third had been sentenced for crimes against property such as housebreaking and auto theft, and the remaining one-third for a miscellany of offenses, including 10.9 percent sentenced for narcotic offenses. The good-time releasees had a higher proportion of narcotic offenders, 15.6 percent as compared with 6.1 percent for the parolees. In this context, it may be noted that certain categories of narcotic offenders are not

eligible for parole but may receive a good-time release.

The median length of the period of confinement for this group of 123 was 6.1 years, for the good-time releasees it was 6.4 years and for the parolees it was 5.4 years, as is noted in Table 6. A study of all of the 480 inmates released from the Reformatory in 1965 reported the median period of confinement for the 109 released on parole that year as 5.3 years and for the 227 released on good-time release it was 4.7 years. That is, the parolees in the sample of warrant cases had, as an average, the same period of confinement as all parolees in 1965 but the warrant cases who had been released on good-time release had been confined substantially longer.

One point concerning the 61 good-time releasees in this group should be noted. There were seven in the group who were ineligible for parole for statutory reasons. Of the remainder there were 25 who had applied for parole one or more times and had been refused. So far as the remaining 29 are concerned there is nothing in the records to indicate that they had ever applied.

The length of the period under supervision before the issuance of the warrant is indicated as Table 7. This is the

length of the period from the date of release from the institution until the date of the issuance of the warrant. The actual length of the periods ranged from less than one month to almost seven years. As the Table indicates the critical period for the releasee is the first six months, and this finding is in line with that reported by Glaser and others who have studied comparable groups of releasees.

The length of the projected period of supervision at the time of the issuance of the warrant is indicated as Table 8. For the parolees in the group this would represent the length of the period between the date of the issuance of the warrant and the date of the expiration of the maximum sentence. For the good-time releasees this period is that remaining from the date of the issuance of the warrant until the expiration of the maximum sentence less 180 days. Presumably the prospect of release from supervision would be an incentive to conformity, but more than half of this group had less than two years of supervision remaining. However, since time is relative this might seem like a very long period to the releasee although it should be kept in mind that, as was noted above, the median period of confinement for this group was 6.1 years.

The reasons given for the issuance of the warrant are indicated as Table 9. The number of different reasons was sub-

stantially greater than that indicated in the Table, and the categories of reasons in the Table are merely approximations.

Three of the items in Table 9 merit further discussion. First, it may be noted, arrest for a new offense is not ordinarily considered to be per se a reason for the issuance of a warrant. If the offense is a misdemeanor, and if the releasee is released after payment of a fine, or serving a short jail sentence, or in some other similar manner, and if the record of the releasee has been otherwise satisfactory, the supervising officer may do no more than reprimand the releasee. If the releasee has been charged with a felony and is in custody, some preliminary investigation of the case against the releasee is made before the decision concerning the warrant is made. Members of the staff of the Board of Parole stated that in most of these cases, including both those charged with felonies and misdemeanors, the releasee, in addition to being charged with a new offense, had also been guilty of a violation of one or more of the Board regulations. As preliminary to the issuance of a warrant a Request for Warrant is prepared by the supervising officer responsible for the releasee. The examination of a number of such requests indicates that the foregoing reports of the staff are correct.

The second point to be mentioned has to do with the total of 328 reasons cited in the Table. The fact is that the number of known violations is substantially larger than this figure, because one reason may actually represent a number of similar violations. To illustrate, one of the most frequently cited reasons is "failure to report" which means the failure to keep an appointment or appointments, which may have been made a number of times either by letter or by telephone. An examination of a sample of the requests noted above on which this reason had been cited indicated a number of broken appointments ranging from two to seven before the request was made. The same would be true of such other items as unauthorized changing of jobs or of address, that is, one such change is seldom the basis for the preparation of a request. A number of changes would ordinarily have transpired.

One other matter may be made in this context. The research unit is currently developing data to be used on the basis for base expectancy tables. Ordinarily these tables discuss "failures" on parole in terms of technical violations or new offenses. The largest part of these cases may be identified as one or the other but there is a gray area in which both may be involved. Also, since almost all of these cases have been charged with

more than one violation, it might be difficult to identify the one most important technical violation which led to revocation.

A third item which merits mention is that listed on the Table as "general failure to cooperate." The reported behavior described here is difficult to classify but would include such actions as frequent dishonesty, the expression of hostile attitudes toward the supervising officer and others, unwillingness to meet family or debtor obligations, and similar behavior. Of course the admission of such reasons for the issuance of a warrant opens the possibility that the request may be only the result of a personality conflict between officer and releasee but, as is noted below, there is little evidence to support such a charge by a revoked releasee. It is my opinion that the evidence required in support of a request and the system of checks and counter-checks against the casual issuance of warrants is such as to militate against the free expression of prejudice by the supervising officer.

With reference to the foregoing, it may be noted that there were 17 supervising officers who had prepared these requests. The number prepared ranged from two to 18 per officer with a median of five. The distribution among officers seems to be fairly random and more careful study of the size and character of the

caseloads of the various officers would be needed before any might be identified as especially rigid or punitive, if any actually are.

TABLE -1
Warrant Group, Race and Sex
Entire Group, Good Time Releasees, and Parolees

Race & Sex	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	123	100.0	61	100.0	62	100.0
Negro - Male	102	82.9	49	80.3	53	85.4
White - Male	18	14.6	10	16.7	8	12.9
Negro - Female	2	1.6	2	3.0	-----	-----
White - Female	1	.8	-----	-----	1	1.6

TABLE 2
Warrant Group, Age
Entire Group, Good Time Releasees, and Parolees

Age, in Years	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	123	100.0	61	100.0	62	100.0
Under 25	4	3.2	1	1.6	3	4.8
25 - 29	16	13.0	8	13.1	8	12.9
30 - 34	24	19.5	11	18.0	13	20.9
35 - 39	24	19.5	12	19.7	12	19.3
40 - 44	17	13.8	7	13.1	10	16.1
45 - 49	13	10.5	8	13.1	5	8.0
50 - 54	10	8.1	6	9.8	4	6.4
55 - 59	9	7.3	6	9.8	3	4.8
60 and Over	6	4.8	2	3.2	4	6.4
Median Age, In Years	38.5 Years		39.5 Years		37.8 Years	

TABLE 3
Warrant Group, Marital Status
Entire Group, Good Time Releasees, and Parolees

Marital Status	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	123	100.0	61	100.0	62	100.0
Married	20	16.3	6	9.8	14	22.5
Single	62	50.4	32	52.4	30	48.7
Separated	23	18.7	14	22.9	9	14.5
Divorced	10	8.1	6	9.8	4	6.4
Widowed	4	3.2	1	1.7	3	4.8
Commonlaw Marriage	2	1.6	1	1.7	1	1.6
Unknown	2	1.6	1	1.7	1	1.6

TABLE 4
Offense, Entire Group, Good Time Releasees and Parolees

Offense	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL ¹	201	100.0	102	100.0	99	100.0
Murder	3	1.5	---	-----	3	3.0
Manslaughter	8	3.9	7	6.8	1	1.0
Rape & A/W/I/T/R	5	2.4	2	1.9	3	3.0
Assault	21	9.6	10	9.8	11	11.1
Robbery	45	22.3	21	20.5	24	24.2
Housebreaking	28	13.9	13	12.7	15	15.2
Grand Larceny	12	5.9	6	5.8	6	6.1
Auto Theft	11	5.4	6	5.8	5	5.0
Fraud, Including Forgery	14	6.9	7	6.8	7	7.1
Felony - Narcotics	22	10.9	16	15.6	6	6.1
Misdemeanors	19	9.4	7	6.8	12	12.1
Other ²	13	6.4	7	6.8	6	6.8

1. The number of offenses was greater than the number of cases because some were serving concurrent sentences for two or more offenses.

2. Includes escape, parole and good time release violations and others.

TABLE 5
Warrant Group, Length of Period of Confinement
Entire Group, Good Time Releasees and Parolees

Length of Period of Confinement, in Years	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	123	100.0	61	100.0	62	100.0
Less Than 1 Year	4	3.2	---	-----	4	6.4
1 - 2 Years	8	6.4	1	1.6	7	11.2
2 - 3 Years	8	6.4	2	3.2	6	9.6
3 - 4 Years	19	15.4	11	18.0	8	12.9
4 - 5 Years	12	9.7	8	13.1	4	6.4
5 - 6 Years	13	10.5	6	9.8	7	11.2
6 - 7 Years	15	12.1	11	18.0	4	6.4
7 - 8 Years	9	7.3	7	11.4	2	3.2
8 - 9 Years	7	5.6	5	8.1	2	3.2
9 - 10 Years	8	6.4	5	8.1	3	4.8
10 - 11 Years	8	6.4	1	1.6	7	11.2
11 - 12 Years	4	3.2	1	1.6	3	4.8
12 - 13 Years	2	1.6	1	1.6	1	1.6
13 - 14 Years	1	.8	---	-----	1	1.6
15 and Over	5	4.0	2	3.2	3	4.8
Median Period in Years	5.7 Years		6.3 Years		5.3 Years	

TABLE 6
Warrant Group, Length of Period Confined
Entire Group, Good Time Releasees, and Parolees

Length of Period, in Years	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	123	100.0	61	100.0	62	100.0
Less Than 1 Year	3	2.4	---	-----	3	4.8
1 - 2 Years	7	5.7	1	1.6	6	9.6
2 - 3 Years	8	6.5	2	3.2	6	9.6
3 - 4 Years	20	16.2	11	18.0	9	14.5
4 - 5 Years	11	8.9	7	11.4	4	6.4
5 - 6 Years	12	9.7	5	8.1	7	11.2
6 - 7 Years	16	13.0	12	19.6	4	6.4
7 - 8 Years	9	7.3	7	11.4	2	3.2
8 - 9 Years	8	6.5	5	8.1	3	4.8
9 - 10 Years	8	6.5	5	8.1	3	4.8
10 - 11 Years	8	6.5	1	1.6	7	11.2
11 - 12 Years	4	3.2	1	1.6	3	4.8
12 - 13 Years	2	1.6	1	1.6	1	1.6
13 - 14 Years	2	1.6	1	1.6	1	1.6
15 and Over	5	4.0	2	3.2	3	4.8
Median in Years	6.1 Years		6.4 Years		5.4 Years	

TABLE 7
Length of Period Under Supervision before Warrant
Entire Group, Good Time Releasees, and Parolees

Length of Period In Months	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent.	Number	Percent
TOTAL	123	100.0	61	100.0	62	100.0
Less Than 3 Mos.	29	23.5	14	22.9	15	24.1
3 - 5 Months	30	24.3	17	27.8	13	20.9
6 - 8 Months	17	13.8	8	13.1	9	14.5
9 - 11 Months	12	9.7	6	9.8	6	9.6
12 - 17 Months	13	10.5	6	9.8	7	11.2
18 - 23 Months	6	4.8	3	4.9	3	4.8
24 - 35 Months	9	7.3	5	8.1	4	6.4
36 - 47 Months	4	3.2	1	1.6	3	4.8
48 and Over	3	2.4	1	1.6	2	3.2
Median Period, In Months	6.6 Months		5.9 Months		7.1 Months	

TABLE 8
Length of Projected Period of Supervision at Time of Issuance
of Warrant, Entire Group, Good Time Releasees and Parolees

Period of Supervision	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	123	100.0	61	100.0	62	100.0
Less Than 1 Year	37	30.0	20	32.8	17	27.4
1 - 2 Years	29	23.5	18	29.5	11	17.7
2 - 3 Years	27	21.9	16	26.2	11	17.7
3 - 4 Years	12	9.7	5	8.2	7	11.2
4 - 5 Years	6	4.8	2	3.3	4	6.4
5 - 6 Years	2	1.6	---	-----	2	3.2
6 - 7 Years	2	1.6	---	-----	2	3.2
7 - 8 Years	1	.8	---	-----	1	1.6
8 - 9 Years	1	.8	---	-----	1	1.6
9 - 10 Years	3	2.4	---	-----	3	4.8
10 Years & Over	3	2.4	---	-----	3	4.8
Life ¹	---	-----	---	-----	---	-----
Median Period In Years	1.9 Years		1.6 Years		2.2 Years	

... Approximately 20 active parolees, at any given time, are on life-time parole. There were no warrants issued for a parolee in this group during this period.

TABLE 9
Reasons for Issuance of Warrants
All Supervised Releasees, Good Time Releasees and Parolees

Reasons for Issuance of Warrant	Entire Group		Good Time Releasees		Parolees	
	No.	Per.	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL ¹	328	100.0	158	100.0	170	100.0
New Offense	68	20.7	40	25.3	28	16.4
Failed to Re- port and/or File Report	55	16.7	33	20.8	22	12.9
Changed Address including leav- ing area	59	17.9	29	18.3	30	17.6
Changing Jobs, In- cluding Failure to Maintain Regular Employment	56	17.0	21	13.2	35	20.5
Use of Narcotics	10	3.3	4	2.5	6	3.5
Use of Alcohol	15	4.5	5	3.2	10	5.8
General Failure to Cooperate	35	10.6	14	8.8	21	12.3
Other ²	30	9.1	12	7.5	18	10.5

1. The total is greater than the total number of warrants because two or more reasons were cited for most cases: The average number of reasons is 2.7 for the good time releasees, it is 2.5, and for the parolees 2.8.

2. Includes illegal use of automobile or possession of weapon, association with known criminals, illegal cohabitation and other. A part of these might be classified as "new" offenses but were not described as such on the warrants.