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Grand Juries and Expertise in the Administrative State

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Grand Jury 2.0
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Modern Perspectives on the Grand Jury

Edited by
Roger Anthony Fairfax, Jr.

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For Fatima Glovena, Regina Charlene-Elizabeth, and Nadia Alcynthia
# Contents

Acknowledgments xii

Introduction xv

Chapter 1 • Enlisting and Deploying Federal Grand Juries in the War on Terrorism 3

*Sara Sun Beale and James E. Felman*

- Grand Jury Authority and Secrecy 5
- The USA PATRIOT Act 7
- The Attorney General’s Disclosure Guidelines 9
- The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act 12
- Conclusion 13
- Bibliography 16
- Notes 18

Chapter 2 • Grand Jurors Speak 25

*Susan W. Brenner*

- Issues 26
  - Jurors Questioning Witnesses 27
  - Exculpatory and/or Additional Evidence 29
  - Whispers and Notes 30
  - Juror Access to Transcripts 31
  - Juror Access to the Law 32
  - Hearsay 33
  - Jury Nullification 34
  - Passivity? 35
  - Grand Jury Meeting to Discuss Responsibilities 38

- Time Management 39
  - Foreperson Issues 40
  - Removing a Grand Juror 42
  - Secrecy Issues: From a Grand Juror 42
  - Secrecy Issues: From a Judge 43
  - Witness Contact with Grand Juror 44
Chapter 3 • Does Grand Jury Discretion Have a Legitimate (and Useful) Role to Play in Criminal Justice?

Roger A. Fairfax, Jr.

Contextualizing Grand Jury Discretion 59
Categorizing Grand Jury “Nullification” 60
Beyond the Normative Debate 61

The Compatibility of Grand Jury Discretion with Constitutional Design and the Rule of Law 62
Redefining Terms: Contours of the Rule of Law 63
The Structural Role of Grand Jury Discretion 66
Separation of Powers/Checks and Balances 66
Federalism 68

Optimizing the Exercise of Discretion in Criminal Justice 70
Inventorying Discretion in Criminal Justice 70
The Grand Jury as a Locus of Robust Discretion 71
Safety Valve 71
Enhanced Deliberation of the Grand Jury 72
Enhanced Access and Exposure to Information 73
Secrecy 74

Enhancing the Administration of Criminal Justice 76
Crime Control 77
Efficiency 79
The Grand Jury and Individual Rights 80

Conclusion 83
Bibliography 84
Notes 92

Chapter 4 • Honoring the Voice of the Citizen: Breathing Life into the Grand Jury Requirement

Michael Daly Hawkins

Bibliography 120
Notes 121
Chapter 5 • Retelling Grand Jury History

Niki Kuckes

The Modern Dogma: Grand Jury Procedure Replicates Historic Practice 128
The Prosecutorial Nature of Modern Grand Jury Procedure 129
The Premise that Modern Grand Jury Procedures Replicate History 130
A Fuller Grand Jury History Is Ambiguous, Contradictory, and Evolving 132
The Grand Jury’s Origins in Ancient Medieval English “Procedure” 134
The American Constitutional Grand Jury in a State of Flux 135
Refuting the Historical Premise of Modern Grand Jury Procedure 136
Refuting the “No Rules” Premise: Historic Dominance of the Legal Evidence Rule 136
Undermining the “No Review” Premise: Historic Debates over the Proper Extent of Judicial Review of Grand Jury Evidence 139
Questioning the “Probable Cause” Premise: Historic Use of the Prima Facie Test for Grand Jury Indictment 142
Using Symbolic Grand Jury History to Mask Complex Conceptual Choices 147
Understanding the Court’s “History” as a Conceptual Choice 148
Risks of Using Symbolic History in Place of a More Nuanced Test How Historicism Retards Nuanced and Thoughtful Analysis 150
How the Court’s “History” Freezes Grand Jury Rules in Place 152
Conclusion 153
Bibliography 155
Notes 157

Chapter 6 • Implementing the Neighborhood Grand Jury

Adriaan Lanni

The Problem: Powerful Prosecutors and Political Pathologies 172
Reforming the Grand Jury 175
Selection 176
Individual Charging Decisions 178
General Charging Policies 184
Conclusion 186
Bibliography 186
Notes 188
Chapter 7 • Prosecutorial Charging Practices and Grand Jury Screening: Some Empirical Observations

Andrew D. Leipold

Screening and Overcharging 196
The Grand Jury’s Restraining Hand 196
Poor Screening and Overcharging: Do We Care? 199
Charging Practices Measured 200
Data and Results: Indictment Versus Outcome 201
Charge Disposition 202
Why Dismissals? 206
Things Change 206
Multiplicity 207
Strategic Charging Practices 207
What Type of Charges Fail? 208
Do Grand Juries Screen? 211
Conclusion 213
Bibliography 214
Notes 215

Chapter 8 • The True Goals of the Modern Grand Jury—and How to Achieve Them

Ric Simmons

Grand Jury Power 224
Allowing Re-Presentation 224
Allowing Hearsay Testimony 225
A Defendant’s Right to Testify 226
Judicial Review of Grand Jury Proceedings 227
The True Function of the Grand Jury 229
Victims 235
Defendants 237
Police Witnesses 239
Grand Jurors 239
Reforming the Grand Jury? 240
Conclusion 244
Bibliography 246
Notes 248

Chapter 9 • Restoring the Grand Jury

Kevin K. Washburn

Establishing the Grand Jury: The Grand Jury in Context 256
Why Juries? 256
CONTENTS

The Grand Jury in American Narrative 257
The Meaning of the Conventional Rhetoric and the Historical Narrative 258
Grand Juries Versus Trial Juries in Contemporary Policy 258
Plea Bargaining, Citizen Participation, and the Grand Jury 259
Trial Jury Nullification and Grand Jury Discretion 260
Scholarly Criticism of the Modern Grand Jury 261
Reconsidering the Role of the Grand Jury as a Check on Prosecutorial Power 262
The Grand Jury as Barometer of Legitimacy and a Theory of What Went Wrong 263
A Theory of What Went Wrong With the Grand Jury 264
The Failure of the Cross-Sectional Ideal 266
The Perniciousness of the Cross-Sectional Ideal in the Grand Jury Context 267
Restoring the Independence of the Grand Jury 268
The “Neighborhood Grand Jury” or the “Grand Jury by Zip Code” 269
The Advantages of Neighborhood Grand Juries for Local Offenses 271
Expanded and Improved Educative Benefits of Jury Service 271
Improved Community Representation and Legitimacy in Criminal Justice 272
Increased Power of Community Relative to the Prosecutor 273
A Colorblind Solution to Racial Problems in Criminal Justice 273
Potential Disadvantages of Neighborhood Grand Juries 274
The Neighborhood Grand Jury 276
Conclusion 277
Bibliography 277
Notes 282

Chapter 10 • Grand Juries and Expertise in the Administrative State 293

Ronald F. Wright

A Brief History of Grand Juries as Administrative Bodies 294
Grand Jury Administrative Functions in a Frontier Democracy 295
Early Evaluations of the Grand Jury 296
Shrinking the Grand Jury’s Administrative Role 298
How Citizen Panels Became Unthinkable 301
Problems with Excluding Citizen Participation 303
Current Forms of Citizen Administration 305
Structuring an Administrative Grand Jury 307
# CONTENTS

Panel as Ombudsman  
Veto over Policy Priorities  
Leadership on Agency Information Policy  
Transition from Criminal to Administrative Context  
Antidotes for Grand Jury Passivity  
Degree of Reliance on an Adversarial System  
Conclusion  
Bibliography  
Notes  

Chapter 11 • Remaking the Grand Jury  

*Roger A. Fairfax, Jr.*  

Grand Jury 1.0  
Classic Grand Jury Critiques  
Costliness  
Ineffectiveness (Over-Compliance)  
Redundancy  
Traditional Grand Jury Reform Proposals  
The Case for Grand Jury Innovation  
The Grand Jury’s Susceptibility to Innovation  
The Grand Jury as an Appropriate Vehicle for Criminal Justice Innovation  

Grand Jury 2.0: The Grand Jury as a Tool to Facilitate  
Cutting-Edge Criminal Procedure  
Plea Bargaining and Sentencing  
Plea Bargaining  
The Grand Jury as a Tool for Increased Popular Input into Criminal Sentencing  
Diversion and ADR  
Deferred Prosecution Agreements  
Drug Courts and Problem-Solving Courts  
Criminal Alternative Dispute Resolution: Victim-Offender Mediation  

Guiding and Regulating Prosecutors  
Guiding Prosecutorial Priorities  
Regulating Prosecutorial Conduct  
Conclusion  
Bibliography  
Notes  

About the Authors  

Index
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Roger Anthony Fairfax, Jr.
Washington, DC
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Introduction

Many believe the grand jury— one of the oldest protections known to the American constitutional order— has strayed from its moorings and has eroded beyond recognition. A common criticism is that the grand jury’s central purpose has morphed from the protection of individual rights to the facilitation of governmental investigative power. Others echo Jeremy Bentham’s 19th century critique that the grand jury is unnecessary and redundant in a modernized criminal justice system. Although commentators differ as to the degree of the grand jury’s atrophy, most scholars, lawyers, and judges paint a fairly bleak portrait of the grand jury’s present utility as the bulwark of liberty it was designed to be. This book challenges the American legal culture to re-imagine the grand jury, both by restoring the its proud heritage and adapting it to modern realities.


This volume, thus, seizes the opportunity to update the discussion and offer modern perspectives on the grand jury—all of which lead to a coherent vision for reforming and remaking the grand jury. Each of the chapters represents a fresh contribution to the grand jury literature by leading criminal law
and procedure scholars and commentators. The book’s synthesis of constitutional theory and history and concrete policy proposal make it required reading for any scholar, student, jurist or lawyer interested in the past, present, or future of the American grand jury.

In Chapter 1, “Enlisting and Deploying Federal Grand Juries in the War on Terrorism,” Sara Sun Beale and James E. Felman explore the role the grand jury—an ancient law enforcement investigative tool—plays in the modern counterterrorism efforts.

In Chapter 2, “Grand Jurors Speak,” Susan Brenner takes us inside the “black box” of grand juror deliberations. As a result of operating an informational website devoted to the grand jury, Professor Brenner has received numerous unsolicited communications for sitting and former grand jurors. Their queries and statements give is a rare peek into how grand juries operate and how grand jurors think.

In Chapter 3, “Does Grand Jury Discretion Have a Legitimate (and Useful) Role to Play in Criminal Justice?” Roger Fairfax illuminates grand jury discretion and places it in its constitutional and historical context, arguing that the grand jury can assist prosecutors in the exercise of their discretion in a way that enhances crime control, criminal justice efficiency, and the protection of individual rights.

In Chapter 4, “Honoring the Voice of the Citizen: Breathing Life into the Grand Jury Requirement,” Judge Michael Daly Hawkins, the author of an influential Ninth Circuit opinion explaining the grand jury’s historical role and function, makes a compelling case for revitalizing the modern grand jury.

In Chapter 5, “Retelling Grand Jury History,” Niki Kuckes challenges the conventional wisdom that modern grand jury law and practice are firmly rooted in historical practice.

In Chapter 6, “Implementing the Neighborhood Grand Jury,” Adriaan Lanni proposes a reengineering of the grand jury as an organ of local democratic influence on prosecutorial charging practices.

In Chapter 7, “Prosecutorial Charging Practices and Grand Jury Screening: Some Empirical Observations,” Andrew Leipold mines empirical data to attempt to shed light on the question whether the grand jury is an effective screen for criminal charges in a system driven by guilty pleas.

In Chapter 8, “The True Goals of the Modern Grand Jury—and How to Achieve Them,” Ric Simmons sets forth a blueprint for helping the grand jury to fulfill its true potential in the modern criminal justice system.

In Chapter 9, “Restoring the Grand Jury,” Kevin Washburn advances a community-based conception for restoring the grand jury’s original purpose.
In Chapter 10, “Grand Juries and Expertise in the Administrative State,” Ronald Wright proposes the grand jury as a model for greater utilization of lay citizens in the oversight and administration of government.

Finally, in Chapter 11, “Remaking the Grand Jury,” Roger Fairfax sketches a blueprint for the grand jury’s functional makeover designed to make it relevant and responsive to the needs of modern criminal justice.