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# One more time

## Judges OK prosecutor's 4th grand jury

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW  
STAFF WRITER

Oakland County Circuit Court judges have approved the formation of Prosecutor Richard Thompson's fourth grand jury since September 1989 to investigate homicides and drug trafficking cases.

Thompson originally requested that this new grand jury be empowered to look at white-collar crime, too, but the judges didn't go along with that.

"I was disappointed in a sense, but on the other hand, I was very pleased they allowed us to impanel a fourth grand jury," Thompson said. "We already have several unsolved murder cases that have been referred to us (by area police departments)."

Circuit Court Chief Judge Richard Kuhn wouldn't comment on why the 16 circuit judges didn't grant Thompson's white-collar-crime request, but said he approves of the work done by the three previous grand juries. "I think all the grand juries we've had thus far have been very productive," he said. "We've broken some very big drug rings out of this county."

Others are not too happy with Thompson's new grand jury. Take Geoffrey Fieger, He's the West Bloomfield attorney who clashed with Thompson twice when the latter used grand juries to bring murder charges against Fieger's client, suicide doctor Jack Kevorkian.

Opposes Thompson

"Mr. Thompson has a history of abusing his authority," Fieger said. "His constant requests for grand juries are really symptoms of his psychological problems. I find it really funny how Mr. Thompson has to keep having these grand juries when prosecutors in other counties don't need them. He's a little Hitler and he needs to be slapped down."

Overcoming male isolation

The monthly meeting of the local chapter of the National Congress for Men and Children features Robert Scannan, M.A., on "Overcoming the Male Isolation and Rediscovering the Male Heart."

The meeting is at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 8, in the Oakland County Commissioners Auditorium, located in the county court-

house, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

The group also will discuss the reintroduction of child support enforcement legislation.

The group meets the second Monday of each month. Interested people are invited to come and bring a friend. Call Jim Thienel, 548-9890, for more information.

Another stick  
Southfield police Chief Joseph State law says that grand juries can sit for six months for sure and another six months if the circuit court approves it. Thompson's last three grand juries sat for one year each. Thompson has held office for four years.

Police Chief Thomas said that grand juries are really helpful because there are some crimes in which police "know who did it," but can't get witnesses to testify because they fear for their safety.

Because a grand jury can grant immunity to witnesses and/or conceal their identities, the possibility of retribution is diminished.

"The system right now is being circumvented through technicalities," Thomas said. "Somebody didn't get their nose blown at the right time and so they're walking the streets again."

Grand juries usually have an advantage over regular police investigators because they have the legal power to compel suspects and witnesses to testify about crimes. If a suspect or witness refuses to testify, they can be thrown in jail for up to a year. The identities of the jurors are kept secret, and everything a grand jury does is done in secret. No public or press are allowed to attend grand jury sessions.

Not permanent

State law says that grand juries

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