

## PLAQUEMINES PARISH DETENTION CENTER

TO: Professor Armstrong  
FROM: Patara Ogunc  
RE: "Better Know a Jail" Memo  
DATE: November 28, 2023

### I. INTRODUCTION

Plaquemines Parish Detention Center facility is located in Davant, Plaquemines Parish County, Louisiana.<sup>1</sup> It is one (1) out of one-hundred and eleven (111) jails located in the state of Louisiana.<sup>2</sup> In 2005, the original eight-hundred (800) bed Plaquemines Parish jail was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.<sup>3</sup> After the destruction of the original jail, Plaquemines Parish Detention Center was to become a replacement.<sup>4</sup> This replacement project was funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA")<sup>5</sup> which is an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security.<sup>6</sup>

Located at 110 Prison Road, Davant, LA 70040, Plaquemines Parish Detention Center is run by the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office.<sup>7</sup> Plaquemines Parish Detention Center is an adult only detention facility which holds primarily Plaquemines Parish County arrestees who were either unable to pay their bail or were denied bail.<sup>8</sup> Plaquemines Parish County court oversees the Detention Center, determining who serves time in the Detention Center as well as determining when to deny arrestees' bail.<sup>9</sup> Coincidentally, the new Detention Center was built due to the planning and want of former Sheriff Jeff Hingle, who is now currently in federal prison for bribery.<sup>10</sup>

### II. JAIL CHARACTERISTICS

After the destruction of the old Plaquemines Parish jail due to Hurricane Katrina, tens of millions of dollars were spent to construct Plaquemines Parish Detention Center.<sup>11</sup> In February of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://monroecountysheriff.info/louisiana/county-jail/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://nicic.gov/resources/nic-library/state-statistics/2019/louisiana-2019#:~:text=Louisiana%20has%20111%20jails%20in,population%20in%202019%20was%2032%2C730.>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.profsyseng.com/projects/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.fema.gov>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://sthelenaso.org/louisiana/county-jail/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2015/feb/10/louisianas-troubled-plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.profsyseng.com/projects/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

2015, Plaquemines Parish Detention Center opened in Davante, Louisiana, becoming one of the largest jails in South Louisiana.<sup>12</sup> The Detention Center has a capacity to house around 871 inmates.<sup>13</sup> This jail has the capability of housing four percent (4%) of the Plaquemines Parish's residents.<sup>14</sup> From the start, the issue revolved around the lack of being able to fill a jail with such a capacity and the excess costs that the parish will incur as a result.<sup>15</sup> The Plaquemines Parish Detention Center features sixteen (16) male housing units and three (3) female housing units.<sup>16</sup> The 207,000 square foot facility contains a medical center, laundry room, kitchen, and inmate meeting area.<sup>17</sup> The Detention Center contains pods that have the capability of housing four inmates each.<sup>18</sup> With over one-hundred million dollars of FEMA money spent to build the Detention Center, it is a massive technologic jail.<sup>19</sup>

The monthly average of individuals booked in Plaquemines Parish Detention Center is around one-hundred and fifty-four (154).<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the facility is run and supervised by about forty-five (45) staff members.<sup>21</sup> While there is not a direct website to the Plaquemines Parish Detention Center, mention since it is run by the Sheriff's Office the website to use would be <https://www.ppsso.net>.<sup>22</sup> However, to access anything to deal with the Detention Center, you must go to the Corrections tab under Departments where you will be unable to find any details of the Center besides it's address.<sup>23</sup> Most of the detainees within Plaquemines Parish Detention Center include first-time offenders and individuals charged with misdemeanors.<sup>24</sup> The inmates of the facility either are in there waiting for their trial to begin, currently going through trial, or are currently waiting to be sentenced.<sup>25</sup> The Detention Center currently houses roughly over two-hundred inmates currently with over seventy percent (70%) of the inmates being African American.<sup>26</sup>

The current Sheriff for Plaquemines Parish is Sheriff Gerald "Jerry" A. Turlich, Jr.<sup>27</sup> In January of 1990, he joined the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office as a corrections officer at the Pointe à la Hache prison.<sup>28</sup> In 2013, he became Deputy Chief at the Sheriff's Office.<sup>29</sup> Last

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qy5WAM0bWuE>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://monroecountysheriff.info/louisiana/county-jail/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2015/feb/10/louisianas-troubled-plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qy5WAM0bWuE>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.profsyseng.com/projects/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qy5WAM0bWuE>.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> <https://monroecountysheriff.info/louisiana/county-jail/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ppsso.net>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ppsso.net/corrections>.

<sup>24</sup> <https://sthelenaso.org/louisiana/county-jail/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>25</sup> <https://shoshonecounty.org/louisiana/county-jail/plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>26</sup> From LA DOC Local Jails.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.ppsso.net/meet-the-sheriff>.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

month, in October of 2023, elections for a Parish Sheriff were held.<sup>30</sup> Sheriff Gerald “Jerry” A. Turlich, Jr. won the re-election to begin his third term as Sheriff.<sup>31</sup>

### III. JAIL TRANSPARENCY

“Anytime there’s a challenge there’s a great opportunity. And we feel like our Sheriff is up to date and knows what direction he wants to go in and he’s going to do everything possible to try and make the accommodations full.”<sup>32</sup> This is a direct quote from the former Plaquemines Parish President, Amos Cormier.<sup>33</sup> This quote was in response to concerns raised by people worried about the extensive money spent on the new Detention Center and the question of where all the inmates will come from to fill it.<sup>34</sup>

The <http://plaquemines.lavns.org> website provides the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff’s Office Jail Roster, however, there are no specifications as to which facility each inmate is being held nor is there direct links to the inmate roster for Plaquemines Parish Detention Center directly.<sup>35</sup> As to the communication abilities and help received from the Detention Center, it is very minimal.<sup>36</sup> There is reports of zero deaths received from students in previous years without any confirmation.<sup>37</sup>

### IV. NOTABLE CASES

In May of 2020, a correctional deputy employed by the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff’s Office assigned to the Plaquemines Parish Detention Center was arrested for malfeasance in office, four (4) counts of introducing contraband into the institution, as well as possession of a firearm and possession with the intent to distribute.<sup>38</sup>

Additionally, there are numerous cases such as *Skeldon v. Plaquemines Parish Detention Center et al*,<sup>39</sup> *Richard, Jr. v. Plaquemines Parish Detention Center et al*, *Ricard v. Plaquemines Parish Detention Center et al*<sup>40</sup>, and *Baker v. Plaquemines Parish Detention Center et al*<sup>41</sup> about

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<sup>30</sup> [https://www.nola.com/news/politics/elections/turlich-easily-re-elected-as-plaquemines-sheriff/article\\_9c78c534-6870-11ee-9491-0f98680bc244.html](https://www.nola.com/news/politics/elections/turlich-easily-re-elected-as-plaquemines-sheriff/article_9c78c534-6870-11ee-9491-0f98680bc244.html).

<sup>31</sup> *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qy5WAM0bWuE>.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

<sup>34</sup> *Id.*

<sup>35</sup> <http://plaquemines.lavns.org>.

<sup>36</sup> From PRA Logs and Assignment #1.

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.brproud.com/news/sheriffs-deputy-arrested-for-bringing-contraband-into-plaquemines-parish-detention-center/>.

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.docketbird.com/cases?case\\_id=laed-2:2019-cv-10486](https://www.docketbird.com/cases?case_id=laed-2:2019-cv-10486); *Skeldon v. Plaquemines Parish Detention Center et al*, 2:19CV1048.

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.docketbird.com/cases?case\\_id=lamd-3:2019-cv-00078](https://www.docketbird.com/cases?case_id=lamd-3:2019-cv-00078); *Richardson v. Plaquemines Parish Detention Center*, 2020 WL 5209302, at \*1 (E.D.La., 2020).

<sup>41</sup> [https://www.docketbird.com/cases?case\\_id=alsd-1:2021-cv-00209](https://www.docketbird.com/cases?case_id=alsd-1:2021-cv-00209); *Baker v. Plaquemines Parish Detention Center*, 1:21CV00209.

the conditions and keeping of the prison. The details and information for these cases are protected, however, so the details and instances are not presentable.