

TO: Professor Andrea Armstrong and Nishi Kumar

FROM: LindseyAnna Pardue

RE: “Better Know a Jail” Memo

DATE: November 29, 2022

Washington Parish Jail

Introduction

There are 3 jails in Washington Parish serving a population of around 47,000 people and an area of about 670 square miles.¹ Among them is Washington Parish Jail, located at 1002 Main Street in Franklinton, Louisiana, which was built in 2002.¹ Washington Parish Jail’s official website can be found at <http://wpsola.gov>. The Jail has the capacity to hold over 1,000 inmates, with a current roster of 191 inmates, as of November 28, 2022.² The highest-ranking officer at Washington Parish Jail is currently Sheriff Randy Seal.³ Warren Montgomery currently serves as the District Attorney, and Johnny Crain is the Clerk of Court.⁴ Out of sixty-four parishes, the Washington Parish Jail is ranked 33rd per capita in the state and 39th in Jails & Prisons per square mile.⁵

Jail Demographics

Unfortunately, the Washington Parish Jail Inmate Roster data regarding demographics is difficult to access and compile. I was able to find another website which lists demographics. However, the numbers are inconsistent with the Washington Parish Jail Inmate total found at their official website. According to the data I found at monroecountysheriff.info, Washington Parish Jail has a population of roughly thirty-four female inmates and 132 male inmates.⁶ The jail population is disproportionately black, with roughly 108 Black jail inmates, two Latino inmates, and fifty-six white inmates.⁷ Washington Parish Jail has a pretrial jail population of 148 inmates, including 108 male pretrial jail inmates and six female pretrial jail inmates.⁸ The jail has a total of 779 jail admissions.⁹ I was able to compile all the demographic data from the Washington Parish Jail official website by going through twenty pages and clicking on each inmate’s profile to find their race and gender. I found that there are currently 161 male inmates,

¹ *Id.*

² <http://wpsola.gov/roster.php>.

³ <https://monroecountysheriff.info/louisiana/county-jail/washington-parish-jail/>.

⁴ <https://doc.louisiana.gov/location/washington-parish/>

⁵ <https://www.countyoffice.org/washington-parish-jail-franklinton-la-2c2/>

⁶ <https://monroecountysheriff.info/louisiana/county-jail/washington-parish-jail/>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

thirty female inmates, and two inmates whose gender is listed as “unknown.”¹⁰ Ninety-seven inmates are white, and ninety-three inmates are black.¹¹ Three inmates are identified as “unknown race.”¹²

Jail Finances

A June 30, 2020 financial report conducted by Carr, Riggs, & Ingram revealed that the jail had revenue totaling \$7,441,757.¹³ Their expenditures ending June 2020 totaled \$7,142,317.¹⁴ The Washington Parish Jail official website includes financial data which conflicts, although it is difficult to interpret. Their 2020 budget revealed \$32,463 in prisoner revenues, with a total income of \$6,993,392.¹⁵ Their jail employee salaries totaled \$3,509,315.¹⁶ They reported \$384,111 budgeted for feeding and maintaining prisoners.¹⁷ Their revenues included ad valorem tax, state revenue sharing, sales tax income, vehicle sales tax income, commissions, fines and license, supplemental pay, WPG reimbursements, DOC reimbursements/probation & parole, prisoner revenues, fee income, grant income, and other miscellaneous incomes.¹⁸ The jail ended June 30, 2020 with \$1,197,610 in cash.¹⁹

Jail News Coverage and Current Litigation

Two incidents of assault at Washington Parish Jail were reported in the month of October. WDSU released an article regarding an assault against a Washington Parish Jail inmate by two other inmates at the jail.²⁰ The incident involved thirty-one year old Emerson Dale Johnson and thirty-year-old Aaron Sowell, both from Bogalusa, located in Washington Parish.²¹ The two were arrested on October 4, 2022 for the assault of another inmate, whose name was not released.²² Johnson was charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, aggravated flight from an officer, two counts of resisting an officer, obscenity, and several traffic offenses in October 2021.²³ Sowell had only been in jail for about three months when the incident

¹⁰ <http://wpsol.a.gov/roster.php?grp=10>

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³

[https://app.la.state.la.us/PublicReports.nsf/0/A0C33DCD711BEDBC8625869B005958F4/\\$FILE/00022FC2.pdf](https://app.la.state.la.us/PublicReports.nsf/0/A0C33DCD711BEDBC8625869B005958F4/$FILE/00022FC2.pdf), at 12

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ http://wpsol.a.gov/plugins/show_image.php?id=1633.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ <https://www.wdsu.com/article/3-washington-parish-jail-inmates-assaulting-inmate-1664909170/41519512#>.

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

occurred.²⁴ He was charged with first-degree rape, carnal knowledge of a juvenile, and two counts of sexual battery.²⁵

An article was released on October 3 by The Advocate regarding a similar incident.²⁶ This incident involved three Washington Parish Jail inmates who assaulted another inmate.²⁷ This unprovoked assault was initiated by Elisha Brown, twenty years old, from Hammond, Louisiana; Travon D. Washington, twenty-one years old, of Amite, Louisiana; and Aaron Little, Jr. of Bogalusa, Louisiana.²⁸ Brown and Washington had been originally charged with the second-degree murder of Xykie Barker, aggravated burglary, aggravated assault, battery, and three counts of theft of a firearm.²⁹ Little was originally charged with first-degree murder, armed robbery, armed robbery with a firearm, illegal use of a weapon, and battery.³⁰

In March of this year, the Advocate published an additional article regarding corruption by one of the Washington Parish corrections deputies.³¹ Twenty-one year old Trey Jenkins of Bush, Louisiana, was caught on jail surveillance smuggling a cell phone and cell phone charger into the parish jail's housing unit.³² It was later discovered that the deputy received a cash app payment for sneaking the phone in shortly after the footage was captured.³³ The deputy was booked for introducing contraband to a correctional facility after confessing to facilitating the transaction.³⁴

In 2014, a case against the Washington Parish Sheriff's Office brought by J.D. Thompson was dismissed.³⁵ The case was dismissed for procedural reasons, regarding a lack of sufficient facial plausibility.³⁶ The Court cited that a "...sheriff's office is not a legal entity capable of being sued..."³⁷

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/article_744e9740-434c-11ed-8ea5-839e8eccafb6.html.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/article_a159133e-9b16-11ec-87b5-5f3f8dac7412.html.

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ <https://casetext.com/case/thompson-v-wash-parish-sheriffs-office>.

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Cozzo v. Tangipahoa Parish Council - President Government*, 279 F.3d 273, 283 (5th Cir. 2002).

Perhaps one of the most upsetting cases to come out of Washington Parish Jail occurred in 2018.³⁸ The case involved two inmates who were brutally raped and beaten by other jail inmates.³⁹ Five former deputies are being sued regarding their role in the incident.⁴⁰ Allegedly, multiple inmates were put in the cell by deputies, who did not intervene or attempt to help after the incident began.⁴¹ One of the victims, who is transgender, experienced post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, including waking up every night, screaming, and experiencing horrifying nightmares and anxiety.⁴²

More recently, two former corrections officers at Washington Parish Jail were “accused of abusing inmates in multiple lawsuits stretching back more than a decade...”⁴³ Brink Hillman and Gary King have been mentioned in several lawsuits brought by prisoners, where unnecessary use of force against inmates and other misconduct were alleged.⁴⁴ Abuse, beatings, and threats were among some of the allegations mentioned in the myriad of cases.⁴⁵ They are currently awaiting trial for the death of 55-year-old Anthony Carl Smith, who was found dead in his cell in march 2019 “just hours after a request for medical attention led to a ‘use of force incident.’”⁴⁶ However, the Washington Parish Coroner ruled his death an accident.⁴⁷ Three guards were involved, all of whom have been indicted for charges of conspiracy to commit obstruction of justice and malfeasance.⁴⁸ The lawsuit regarding Smith’s death was filed by inmate Kyron Folsie in July.⁴⁹ Folsie expressed that he overheard Hillman, King, and other officers mention “‘a murder,’ and that witnesses at the prison had seen the officers ‘kill’ Smith on March 10.”⁵⁰ Folsie claims that another guard has threatened him multiple times since his report, in an effort to get him to drop the report.⁵¹ In 2007, Jamie Troquille, a former inmate, filed a lawsuit against Hillman and four other Rayburn guards, which was dismissed on a “technical violation.”⁵² The suit claimed that three correctional officers beat Troquille after he got into an argument with

³⁸ <https://www.wdsu.com/article/its-horrific-attorney-for-transgender-inmate-allegedly-raped-at-washington-parish-jail-says/23603947>.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/washington-parish-prison-guards-arrested-in-inmate-death-previously-faced-multiple-abuse-lawsuits/article_547b0e68-4f6f-11ea-a342-abf3b4002828.html.

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

another guard.⁵³ After the beating, Troquille claims he asked Hillman to report the incident as an emergency multiple times because he was “vomiting blood and it hurt when (he) breathed.”⁵⁴ He claims that Hillman then refused to report the incident.⁵⁵ Again in 2007, another suit was filed against Hillman claiming that he “stood as lookout while another correctional officer forced an inmate to perform sex acts.”⁵⁶ A federal magistrate judge ruled in favor of Hillman and the other guards involved.⁵⁷ In 2008, inmate Sean Walker alleged that Hillman “forced him to kneel in his cell while restrained by ‘hand-cuff waist belt combination’ shackles, then let Walker’s cellmate attack him.”⁵⁸ This suit was “dismissed as frivolous.”⁵⁹

Washington Parish Jail is currently involved in a lawsuit which was filed by one, Michael Norman.⁶⁰ A complaint was filed against Juani Bautista, McKenzie Cooper, Jim Miller, Randy Seal, and Washington Parish Jail on August 3 of this year.⁶¹ On November 4th of this year, the Magistrate Judge ordered a cancellation of the preliminary conference scheduled for January 5, 2023.⁶² The case involves alleged section 1983 civil rights violations.⁶³

Personal Interactions with the Jail and Class Data Collected Since 2019

My personal interactions with Washington Parish Jail were the easiest of the four institutions I was assigned to contact. I first emailed a public records request on August 30, 2022, following up on September 5 after not hearing from the jail. I received a response from Chief Civil Deputy Brent Jones on September 20 with an attached public death record.

According to the records our class has requested and received since 2019 and the records I personally obtained, there have been a total of five deaths at the jail since 2015.⁶⁴ The record I received contained death information for four inmates from 2016 to present.⁶⁵ Only one of the deaths was due to a medical issue, metastatic brain cancer, affecting an inmate named Robert Lester, who had a recorded pre-existing condition.⁶⁶ One of the deaths was the result of an

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ https://www.docketbird.com/cases?case_id=laed-2:2022-cv-02512.

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ LindseyAnna Pardue’s 2022 Incarceration Seminar Interactions PRR to Washington Parish Jail via email

⁶⁵ September 20, 2022 Public Death Record.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

inmate suicide.⁶⁷ The suicide occurred overnight and was the result of a hanging.⁶⁸ Three of the decedents were white males, and two were black males.⁶⁹ None of the five inmates were convicted at the times of their deaths.⁷⁰ Two of the deaths occurred in a jail common area, and one occurred in an inmate's cell, which was part of general housing within the jail facility.⁷¹ One of the deaths occurred at Tulane Hospital, and one death occurred in an unspecified medical center outside of the facility.⁷² Three of the five deaths were due to unknown causes, although one notes that the decedent had an "illness" resulting from "multiple medical issues".⁷³ Of the three deaths caused by unknown factors, one was assumed to be the result of an overdose.⁷⁴

While my personal interactions with the Washington Parish Jail were relatively pleasant, it is obvious that there are still many problems at the jail, as evidenced by the myriad of reports involving acts of violence and corruption from correctional officers and jail personnel at the facility, the lack of transparency regarding their financial records, and the numerous lawsuits the jail has been involved in. This begs the question, are those jails which are more evasive regarding public records requests even more likely to have evidence of violence and corruption?

⁶⁷ <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1QMQOWsWBgTNiLaQFCliZ3xjyLBI5ef1>.

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ *Id.*

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³ *Id.*

⁷⁴ *Id.*