



An Overview of TBI and Hate Crime Responsiveness

Remarks by Dale Armour, Asst. Special Agent in Charge

History

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation was born as a result of a highly publicized murder that occurred in Greene County in December of 1949. The heinous crime aroused the emotions of citizens throughout the region. In an address to the Tennessee Press Association in January of 1951, John M. Jones, Sr., publisher of the Greeneville Sun, called for the creation of an unbiased state agency to assist local law enforcement in the investigation of serious crimes.

The Tennessee Press Association became intensely involved in the project. Mr. Jones was named chairman of a committee to work with the General Assembly, which was then in session. A bill was passed shortly thereafter, and Governor Gordon Browning signed it into law on March 14, 1951. The entity created was called the Tennessee Bureau of Criminal Identification (TBCI).

At its inception the Bureau was housed within the Department of Safety and functioned as the Department's "plainclothes" division. On March 27, 1980, following a series of legislative hearings, the organization was re-established as an independent agency and renamed the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI).

Since that time, the Bureau has grown significantly, and continues to meet the demands of providing up-to-date investigative, forensic science and crime information services as well as support to Tennessee's entire criminal justice system. The TBI takes pride in the fact that it has evolved over the years into a respected law enforcement organization with highly trained, dedicated, professional employees. The Bureau is one of the few law enforcement agencies in the country to achieve the level of accreditation that it has, with both Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB), and continues its commitment to maintain those accreditations.

Authority

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) is Tennessee's primary criminal investigative agency. In that role, the Bureau is responsible for providing support to local law enforcement agencies in joint investigations and investigate crimes at the request of the local District Attorneys General for each of the state's 31 Judicial Districts. The **TBI has original jurisdiction over crimes related to drugs, fugitives, public corruption, official misconduct, organized crime, illegal gambling, Medicaid provider fraud,**

patient abuse, social security administration fraud, cyber crime, domestic terrorism and employees or prospective employees of the bureau of the Department of Safety.

The five major divisions of the TBI are the Criminal Investigation Division, the Drug Investigation Division, the Forensic Services Division, the Information Systems Division and the Administrative Services Division.

The TBI is accountable to the District Attorneys General and to the Judiciary for its performance of services and to the Executive and Legislative branches for support functions. TBI has been designated to coordinate the gathering, analysis, and dissemination of state and local criminal justice data to the Governor, General Assembly, and all law enforcement agencies. TBI also maintains the statewide computer network for criminal justice information and conducts classes for users of the network.

At the request of the Governor, the Attorney General and Reporter, any member of the Board of Parole, the Commissioner of Correction, or a District Attorneys General, the TBI is authorized to conduct investigations into allegations of fraud, corruption, or dishonesty involving granting, revocation or denial of parole, release classification status, or executive clemency. When requested to investigate, the TBI is authorized to look at whether the recipient of executive clemency has been or is presently abiding by the terms and conditions imposed on the granting of executive clemency.

The Court of Judiciary can ask TBI to conduct investigations into any allegation of improper conduct of judicial officials. The Governor and/or the Tennessee Supreme Court Chief Justice requests TBI to conduct background investigations on individuals considered by the Governor for appointment to positions of trust and responsibility. The TBI also opens investigations into the removal of officers, trust, unlawful restraint of trade and discrimination, violations of the Tennessee Security Act of 1980, or violations of the Consumer Protection Act of 1977 when the Attorney General and Reporter requests.

The TBI is responsible for maintaining up-to-date forensic laboratories to assist all law enforcement agencies in the processing and analyzing of criminal evidence.

How the TBI response to Hate crimes investigations

The state of Tennessee does have a Civil rights intimidation 39-17-309 specific statute. The TBI at the request of the District Attorney General TBI would investigate any violation of Tennessee law. The motive of any crime is important to the investigation. If a victim was assaulted or property destroyed with the motivation being to deprive someone of their quality of life the individual crime would be thoroughly investigated and the outcome presented to the District Attorney General for prosecution.

The TBI has investigated and charged individuals with Civil rights intimidation for vandalism where race or bias was the motive. We also work with our local and federal partners to bring cases to successful conclusions through the successful prosecution in state or federal jurisdictions.

The TBI is dedicated to our mission statement, to ensure **"that guilt shall not escape, nor innocence suffer."**