

Media inquiry re: status of prisoners held without trial beyond the Speedy Trial Act limits, other related issues

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Hello, Atty. Lynch, good to talk to you again. This is Diane Bukowski, Editor, Voice of Detroit, LLC. The Court Administrator's office has told me that you are the contact person for my inquiries, which are related to our recent story at:

[UNLAWFUL, UNJUST! RALLY THURSDAY MAR. 17 TO FREE WRONGLY HELD PRISONERS; OPEN VISITS, COURTS, FILES | VOICE OF DETROIT: The city's independent newspaper, unbossed and unbought](#)

See also from Michigan Radio/NPR: <https://omny.fm/shows/stateside/jail-time-grows-in-wayne-co-during-pandemic>

I am following up on the first story, in which I published interviews from eight prisoners held in the Wayne County Jail past the 6-month pre-trial limit set in Michigan's Speedy Trial Act. One (Javonte Wiley) has been held for four years, the others for two and three years. Michigan Radio notes that at least 121 Wayne Co. jail prisoners have been held without trial past those limits. The evident excuse for this breach of state law has been the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. First, Javonte Wiley and Corey Holmes have been held since 2017, two years before the pandemic existed. They should have gone to trial BEFORE the pandemic. Note that Javontae Wiley had two jury trials prior to the pandemic, in which the charges against him were dismissed. But Chief Judge Timothy Kenny, acting as a one-man grand jury, reinstated those charges and Mr. Wiley still awaits a THIRD trial on the same capital charges.
2. The Court has not issued press releases or other notifications to let the public know when this "emergency" situation is expected to end. In fact, mask requirements and other precautions for COVID-19 and its variants have been lifted in the state and Wayne County in the past months. When does the criminal court expect to go back to pre-COVID-19 conditions, and why hasn't it already done this?
3. The Criminal Court Clerk's office has informed me that they are still closed due to the pandemic, and therefore cannot handle requests for criminal files and other public documents. I used to go to the Criminal Court Clerk's office in past years, and was able to request criminal files for review for VOD articles. I could even go on the computer they kept for public use and pull down documents that had been posted internally. Wayne County Probate Court has been posting public links to documents BECAUSE of the pandemic, since the public cannot come in and get copies. Why isn't the Criminal Court following suit?
4. When will the Courts open back up completely for the public and media? When will trials take place on a pre-pandemic basis?

Looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,
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