

COMMUNITY PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF THE WEST PALM BEACH COMMUNITY

SERVED BY

STATION WHDT (SCRIPPS Broadcasting Holdings LLC)

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

(April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020)

WHDT airs programming on the Court TV schedule.

Issues of important local concern include:

The COVID-19 epidemic and what it means for the 6th Amendment and the right to a speedy trial as in person jury trials are being suspended, as well as prison safety and requests to be released for fear of catching the virus.

Crime and personal safety.

The continuing problem of drug and alcohol addiction and abuse that contribute to criminal behavior.

The vulnerability of woman, children and the elderly when it comes to crime victimization.

The duality of standards when it comes to race, income and education and how defendants are prosecuted.

The on-going lack of help for those with mental illness and psychological impairment who find themselves in the criminal justice system.

Forensic Files:

The syndicated show Forensic Files airs on Court TV ten times (8:00AM & 8:30AM) on weekdays and six times (various) on Saturdays and four times (10PM-12AM) Sundays. The program runs 30 minutes in length.

Eagle-eyed technical experts prove there is no such thing as a perfect crime as they assemble the pieces every criminal leaves behind. This documentary style series uses dramatic crime re-creations and sometimes parts of the actual investigations are used to recount the events. Some of the re-creations include alternate versions of the crimes, which are disproved by science. The show's episodes follow each case from the initial investigation until it reaches its legal resolution.

The FBI Files:

The syndicated show The FBI Files airs on Court TV five times during the week (7-8AM) and six times (various) on Saturdays and eight times (various) on Sundays. The program runs 60 minutes in length.

Real FBI cases are recounted as Bill Kurtis hosts this documentary series that profiles criminal cases involving high profile murders. Each episode describes actual FBI cases which include murder, narcotics, bank robberies, kidnappings, etc. These are portrayed through dramatic reenactments and interviews with agents and forensic scientists who worked on the investigations.

Corrupt Crimes:

This syndicated program investigates recent crime stories in complete details with expert analysis and dramatic storytelling. These crimes can range from violent crimes such as murder to corporate crimes and mob racketeering. It airs twenty-two times on weekdays (various times) and twelve times on Saturdays (various times) and eight times on Sundays (various)

It Takes A Killer:

This docuseries (30 minutes in length) looks at the world's most notorious murders and take viewers inside the minds of the killers. Expert investigators review evidence, profile each killer's behavior and describe the chilling forensic details of each case. This series airs twenty times on weekdays (12:00AM to 4:00AM) and eight times on Saturdays (various) and four times on Sundays (various)

Deep Undercover:

Airing 10 times on weekdays (4-5AM) and four times on Sundays (various) this 30 minute true crime series is from writer and producer Joe Pistone, who is the real-life Donnie Brasco. Each episode recounts an investigation from the point of view of the undercover officer involved with the case.

Murderous Affairs:

This series uses re-enactments and news coverage of famous romantic affairs, both domestic and foreign, that ended in murder. The series lays out the background and circumstances leading up to each crime and where the case's deposition stands now. This series is 30 minutes in length and airs ten times on weekdays (5-6AM) and four times on Sundays (various)

OJ25:

Because many jury trials have been suspended due to the Coronavirus pandemic, Court TV has been limited to the amount of live court trial to cover. Because they own the rights to the original O.J. Simpson, Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman murder trial, they are re-airing the trial in two-hour installments on Tuesdays and Thursdays (9-11PM), Saturdays (1-3PM) and on Sundays (8-10AM and 8-10PM). This trial was not only one of the longest criminal trials in history, it was also one of the first to be televised to a worldwide audience. The nature of the crime was fraught with issues of wealthy people of notoriety and glamorous

locations, gruesome murderous details and crime scene photos, and the issue of race as Mr. Simpson was on trial for the murders and is Black and the two victims were Caucasian. The trial divided the country along racial lines and the subsequent acquittal left many in disbelief. This trial occurred 25 years ago, and considering recent racial events and social unrest, reiterates that issues of race in this country are still pervasive.

Court TV Court Cases

Because there are few actual live court cases – Court TV has chosen to follow topical news stories (criminal cases) that will be or have been part of court cases.

April – For the first time in history, the Supreme Court allowed live camera coverage of oral arguments, and the Supreme Court’s hearings of cases that the judges will decide on this session. Court TV not only aired that coverage it also aired profiles of many of the justices including Chief Justice John Roberts, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Clarence Thomas, Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, The court will hear and make two very big decisions this session – one case deals with the mandate under the Affordable Healthcare Act to force religiously affiliated businesses to provide medical coverage for birth control to their employees even if they have religious opposition to it. And the second case will deal with whether President Trump can refuse to respond to a subpoena to produce his tax records prior to his becoming president.

Court TV coverage/cases for April:

Idaho v. Lori Vallow – Court TV followed this case over many days from April, May and June as more and more details came out of police investigations. Lori

was first arrested for non-cooperation in a missing persons case and evading the police. Court TV then covered the details as more charges were being considered. Police were investigating the shooting death of her ex-husband and she was named a suspect in that as well. Over the course of three months, police kept searching for her two missing children, and were finally tipped off to the possibility of a burial site on her current husband's property where police discovered the charred, buried remains of her daughter and son. Lori and her current husband were members of the Mormon faith who then branched off to start a Doomsday Cult. Charges are pending against Lori's current husband as well as his late wife died a suspicious death. The courts have yet to charge either with the actual murders of the children, but charges are pending. This case emphasized the need for better protection of young people as the grandparents of Lori's children were the ones constantly pushing police to pursue Vallow and her new husband to produce her two children who had not been seen nor were in contact with their grandparents for months. There were daily updates lasting minimally 10 minutes on this story from 4/3/20 though 6/30/20 as more evidence was found and charges were made.

The 6th Amendment:

The channel examined what trials may look like in the next several months during the pandemic. Many criminals are arguing that they are entitled to a speedy trial based on the 6th Amendment. However, with courthouses shuttered and social distancing in place, traditional court hearings cannot take place. Many defendants are pleading out their cases to have resolution. The next several months may see court proceedings happening "virtually" over Skype, Zoom and Facetime and with or without a jury. Lawyers argue that without being able to see potential jurors in person, they cannot do an appropriate job of jury selection.

COVID-19 and Prisons:

As one can imagine, a big concern of the pandemic is keeping it from spreading through the prison system and killing large numbers of prisoners. Most prisons do not have adequate healthcare systems to help one or even two prisons that need

to be on ventilators let alone potentially dozens. Many prisons are using the pandemic to petition for early release to remove them from potential harm. Some are close to the end of a sentence; others have underlying health conditions. Each prison system is handling it differently. But prisons want to contain the inmates and suppress any potential rioting that might occur if the virus overwhelms a facility. Court TV looked how the prisons are addressing the problem and what high-profile inmates might be getting early releases including Paul Manafort and Michael Cohen. Updates were aired on 4/2/20, 4/6/20, 4/8/20, 4/30/20, 4/30/20, 6/4/20, 6/23/20.

COVID-19 Prosecutions:

Many pastors and some individuals are facing prosecution for flagrantly defying the social distancing and mask-wearing mandates issued by local governments to protect the health of the general population and slow the spread. These cases may set the benchmark for how cases will be treated all over the country. Local municipalities want citizens to take the orders seriously as the COVID-19 case numbers are increasing daily and the spread is not slowing down. 4/1/20.

April cases follow-up/coverage:

The Netflix mini-series Tiger King has opened new interest in a missing husband case. Stories aired on 4/2/20, 4/3/20, 4/14/20

The Killer Clown case (which was a cold case based locally in Wellington Florida) is heating up. With new and better DNA technology, an arrest has been made. And a trial is set for the end of the year. Story aired on 4/7/20

The Parkland shooter faces the death penalty when it comes to trial, as Nicholas Cruz was found mentally competent. Story aired on 4/13/20

Linda Tripp, the informant in the Bill Clinton Monica Lewinsky scandal died. This trigger a discussion on the channel about recording of conversations as admissible evidence. Story aired on 4/8/20

The Synagogue Massacre suspect is also facing the death penalty. Story aired on 4/23/20

Convicted murder Robert Durst is seeking a mistrial over COVID-19 delays. Story aired on 4/30/20, 6/4/20, 6/23/20

May cases follow-up/coverage:

The shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia and the subsequent arrests of three suspects - one of who recorded the other two on video chasing the jogging, unarmed Arbery down in their truck and confronting him and shooting him, was covered over the course of many days. Questions about the video, why the state attorney took so long to bring charges and why so many prosecuting attorneys recused themselves have swirled. The case is continuing to unfold and has ignited a firestorm for calls of racism and white preferential treatment by the police department. Daily story coverage began on 5/6/20 and ran M-F through 6/10/20.

Then in Mid-May – unarmed EMT Breonna Taylor was shot eight times as part of a undercover operation that forced their way into the apartment she shared with a suspected drug dealer they had a warrant for. This has enflamed the racial situation and even more calls into the way police are acting on warrants and how much force they are authorized to use. There is debate about whether the police announced themselves or not. The case is still evolving as body-cam footage is being looked at. Two officers are on administrative reassignment and one has been fired. Court TV followed all the updates on this case. Coverage ran 5/15/20, 5/29/20, 6/12/20, and 6/25/20

Scott Peterson who was convicted of killing his 8-month pregnant wife Laci and their unborn son has petitioned to challenge his death penalty sentence. Story aired on 5/26/20 and 6/2/20

And on May 26th George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis police custody, as an arresting officer knelt on his neck for more than 8 minutes after Floyd was handcuffed and put face down on the ground. Bystanders recorded the entire incident on their phones. Floyd was being arrested for a non-violent offense. The four officers were fired at first and have subsequently been charged with various degrees of murder. Coverage began on 5/26/20 and ran M-F through 6/16.

The three high profile killings of Arbery, Taylor and Floyd along with many previous killings such as Trayvon Martin ignited weeks of protests most peaceful, but some devolved into riots and looting against the police department that continue to displace systemic racism in their treatment and law enforcement against Black citizens. Court TV ran a 43 minute long special on 6/22/20 at 8:00PM entitled **Black & Blue** which looked at the criminal justice system and continuing problem of racial inequality.

June cases follow-up/coverage:

All three killings and cases crescendo in June with testimony in the Arbery case, charges in the Taylor case and massive national coverage, autopsy findings, and charges in the Floyd case. It included testimony of George Floyd's brother to a U.S. House of Representative Judiciary Committee hearing on policing in America. Court TV covered all appearances and testimony and charges in the cases. And an additional case – the shooting of Rayshard Brooks at a Wendy's has also become a national, racially charged story adding to the racial unrest. Coverage of the Brooks shooting aired on 6/15/20, 6/17/20 and 6/30/20.

In addition, Court TV followed the events surrounding the search for a missing Ft. Hood Soldier – 20-year-old Vanessa Guillen – who was last seen on April 22nd on the base. Her keys, purse and ID were all still on the base. Human remains were discovered at the end of June more than 20 miles from the base along the Leon River in an area where another missing soldier's remains were discovered earlier in the year. Many young, local women of color continued to protest in the streets to keep the search for Vanessa Guillen in the news and her remains were uncovered by a private search organization hired by the family not the police. Her

family wants answers as to how she could not be protected on base after she filed a sexual harassment claim that was not taken seriously by her superior officers. Coverage of her disappearance and subsequent discovery of her remain aired on 6/25 and 6/30.

More than any other story, the cases of racial profiling, police brutality and unnecessary fatal force in some cases were the prevailing coverage of the daily live courtroom coverage and discussions on the channel that took place Monday through Friday on Court TV. They reiterate the discrepancy between the treatment of people of color in the criminal justice system and white people.

All of the day's court cases, follow-ups and criminal proceeding were reviewed Monday through Friday from 6-9PM during the program **Closing Arguments with Vinny Politan**.