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## A Message From the Director

By J. EDGAR HOOVER

WASHINGTON — The search for truth in many courtrooms today has taken on new dimensions. In some instances, the court, in addition to administering justice, is forced to justify its existence and physically police its proceedings to maintain a modicum of decorum.

There are occasions when the court seemingly spends as much time trying to control shouting defendants and their recalcitrant counsel as in conducting the trial. In short, the courts are now experiencing some of what law enforcement for years has suffered in full measure—violent disrespect for the law and diabolical schemes to prove that the system of justice does not work in America.

For many, reverence for the law is no longer a sacred principle. The attributes so vital to impartial courtroom procedure are scorned, and court authority is tested. Let us make no mistake about it. When defendants call the jurist "a fascist dog" and "a lying pig," shout curses and obscenities at the court, chant in unison, and completely destroy the dignity of the courtroom, the duty of the court is

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axiomatic. The consequences must be sufficient to deter such action.

Aside from the contemptuous courtroom conduct itself, equally disturbing are the public agitations and blatant outcries from some quarters against a judge who takes firm action to meet the problem head-on. The beleaguered jurist is an instant villain in these contrived sideshows and, like the law enforcement officer before him, becomes a target of repeated abuse.

In discussing courtroom conflicts in March, 1971, Hon. Warren E. Burger, Chief Justice of the United States, stated in part, "... I do know this—and so does anyone who has read legal history and read the newspapers in recent years—that John Adams, and his reincarnated colleagues at the bar, would be shocked and bewildered at some of the antics and spectacles witnessed today in the courtrooms of America. They would be as shocked

and baffled as are a vast number of contemporary Americans and friends of America all over the world." The Chief Justice urged that priority be given to methods and machinery, to procedure and techniques, and to management and administration of judicial resources to meet the challenges to our system of justice. Fortunately, there is indication that most of the members of the legal profession agree with the Chief Justice and are working to correct these conditions.

If the judiciary is to keep the faith of the American people, then it must deal promptly and decisively with vituperative outbursts and disruptive tactics in court. Justice without strength will soon become no justice at all.

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*This "message from the Director," J. Edgar Hoover, appears in February's F.B.I. Law Enforcement Bulletin.*