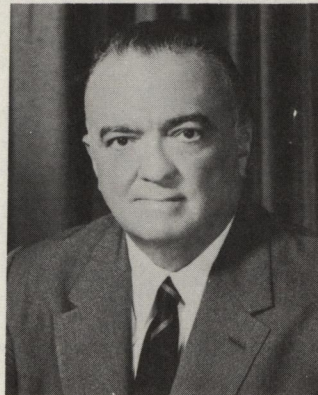


# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

## TO ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS



TODAY, THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS live in fear. They fear for their lives, the safety of their families, their homes, and their businesses. The cause of their fear is CRIME.

Without a doubt, crime is rapidly becoming our Nation's number one internal problem. For years, we have seen apologists, misguided sociologists, and well-meaning but misinformed public officials rationalize the spiraling crime rate and excuse criminal behavior. We have seen an apathetic public ignore the warning signals of surging criminality which is costing taxpayers an estimated \$27 billion annually. We have seen a criminal "feedback", caused by judicial leniencies, including pardons, paroles, and probation, which is a disgrace to our system of criminal justice. And we have seen loopholes, technicalities, and delays release hundreds of hardened, unrepentant criminals on the streets to prey again on the public while awaiting trial on easily provable charges.

Nearly 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  million crimes were reported in 1966, an 11 percent increase over 1965. Figures for the first 6 months of 1967 show a 17 percent increase above the 1966 totals for the same period. Is it any wonder that more and more people are living in fear of crime?

Let us examine some of the popular arguments by those who attempt to explain away our intolerable crime problem. First, we are told that crime increases because our population continues

to grow. This is true, but the volume of crime is up 62 percent since 1960 while our national population has risen only 9 percent during that period. Thus, crime is outstripping population growth by almost 7 to 1.

We are told that revised and improved reporting methods by law enforcement agencies result in more violations being reported. This contention carries no weight. Hundreds of departments which have had approved uniform crime reporting systems for years continue to have increases in all categories year after year with no change whatsoever in their reporting methods. These increases are attributable to only one thing—a rise in the volume of crime. Further, agencies which do update their reporting systems are not included in the national trend totals until they have established two comparable records under their revised setup. This is done to avoid any marked increase or decrease which may result from a change in reporting procedures.

And we are told that much of the rise in crime is caused by the extensive population growth of the crime-prone young age group. Here again we see shallow reasoning. The young-age-group population, 10 to 17 years, rose 19 percent during the 7-year period of 1960 through 1966. Arrests of persons in this group for serious crimes increased 54 percent during the same time.

No right-thinking person could oppose long-range programs to alleviate and eradicate con-

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ditions which breed crime. But the man, woman, and child on the street today are more concerned with their immediate safety. And rightly so, since the risk of their becoming victims of serious crime has risen 48 percent since 1960.

The young child who is criminally assaulted, the corner grocer who is repeatedly robbed, the elderly lady at the bus stop who is mugged and brutally beaten, and the thousands of others who are victimized each day by vicious thugs want instant as well as permanent relief. They, too, have rights. But their cries for help are frequently drowned out by the clamor for mercy and leniency for guilty lawbreakers who scoff at law and order and the rights of society.

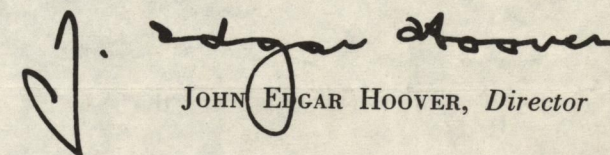
Justice must extend beyond the courtroom back to the site where the victim's rights are violated. When the individual is no longer reasonably secure in his home and on the streets of

his community, then justice is not served. Rather, the criminal is being favored at the expense of the law-abiding citizen.

Crime can no longer be shrouded by appeasement and rationalization. Its magnitude is frightening. Crime must be reduced by eliminating the huge profits and the soft justice which attract criminal-minded individuals. Avalanches of crime and terrorism cannot be tolerated in a society of free men. Either we win the war against crime or the priceless heritage which we cherish will be destroyed.

Full justice is needed—stern justice. We need justice which keeps the balance true and affords the law-abiding public an even break. We need justice which deals swiftly and surely with the criminal, convincing justice which means a quick arrest, prompt prosecution, and substantial punishment of the guilty lawbreaker.

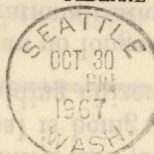
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JOHN EDGAR HOOVER, Director



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