

December 26 , 1996

To the people of Lowell and the Commonwealth:

I wish to apologize to you for a statement I made on May 17, 1995, at the Lowell District Court, during an informal "off-the-record" conference in my chambers. The conference involved a criminal prosecution of seven Cambodian defendants, each of whom was represented by separate counsel. Present at that hearing were the defense counsel, the prosecutor, two court personnel and myself.

During the conference, I uttered the words, with reference to the defendants, that "We ought to send them right back to the Killing Fields." No matter what the context, this reference to a genocidal atrocity constituted an egregious wrong on my part, for which I wish to express my deepest apologies.

It is my obligation, as a judge, to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety in all my activities and to perform my judicial duties without bias or the appearance of bias, whether in deeds or words. I pledge to you that the statement, although heinous in its content, was not motivated by any bias toward the defendants or Cambodians generally. I ask you to forgive me and to accept my promise that such statements will have no place in my future performance as a judge.

Respectfully,

  
Hon. Richard A. Mori