

**THE RIGHT NOT TO REMAIN SILENT**

Ramsay G. Najjar  
 Published by Naufal  
 English or Arabic  
 400 pages  
 \$30

The subjects of the Judiciary and Communication share many values, and even objectives. The relationship is glaringly obvious, so much so that it has so far been invisible, before, that is, reading this revealing book. This encyclopedic treatise takes the reader by the hand from the founding of earthly justice to the present day, or “from the law of the jungle to international legitimacy.” Najjar, whose mastery of copywriting has driven his career through the uncharted waters of the Middle East’s communication sphere, has managed to tame both the English and the Arabic language editions of his book, playing on words to create paradoxes that in just two words, juxtaposed, create an abstract for each chapter. He brands them as dualities: Law and Justice, Judges and Jurors, Image and Reputation, Right and Truth, Power and Immunity, among other enticing teasers.

**THE SOUND OF SILENCE**

Najjar distinguishes ‘Judiciary’ and ‘Media’ as “When the hushed silence meets a resounding uproar.” The silence in the courtroom is no more. Humanity is rebelling, as it does not want to be silenced by anyone. The advent of the media, especially with the Internet, has communicated to public opinion the edicts of justice. The book is full of telling anecdotes. For example, it attributes the first ‘breaking news’ to the myth of Pheidippides, the Athenian runner who dashed 40 km from Marathon to Athens to announce a victorious battle. Drawing from ancient texts – the Bible and the Koran, as well as other references – he infers that the registering and safekeeping of documentation and public records are at the same time acts of preserving rights as well as announcing them. Justice and communication!

**WORLD TOUR**

The author takes the reader on a world tour of the codes of ethics. The professional practice is Europe, the US, and the Arab World. He sees that the two professions of the Judiciary and the Media carry noble missions and a commitment that goes beyond the value and ethics of work and productivity. They serve as vocations with the cause to “enable humanity to race against its selfishness.” In England, judges are considered the “keepers” rather than the “makers” of the law. In France judges have the duty to interpret the law within the limitation of what has been written, with special emphasis on the independence of the judiciary from executive and legislative powers. In various Arab countries, while judges are in theory independent from politics, the law is “inextricably tied to religion.”

**WHY AND HOW DOES THE JUDICIARY COMMUNICATE?**

Two chapters are dedicated to answer these questions, backed by landmark historical case studies, as benchmarks for best practice. The judiciary needs to communicate in order to solidify its reputation for integrity and trust. It contributes to its



positioning as an independent power and builds its “deterrence and immunity capabilities.” Other reasons include informing and educating the public, gaining national support, and other benefits that any sector would gain from communication, such as awareness, and increasing stakeholder engagement. The book proposes a communication strategy for the judiciary, demonstrating that it does not differ from any other sector. The classic ‘Who, Why, Where, What, How’ is the place to start. Stakeholders are identified, objectives outlined, results measured, and appropriate communication tools described.

**THE FUN STUFF**

The best is left for the lucky chapter seven. The reader is entertained by reliving past trials that shook public opinion throughout history: The judgment of Joan of Arc (Jeanne d’Arc), Galileo, Anastasia, the Dreyfus Affair, Sacco and Vanzetti, the Nuremberg Trials, JFK, Michael Jackson, and others. We are taken behind the scenes of the trial of O.J Simpson, Lorena Bobbitt, who cut off her husband’s male organ, and the tribulations of Jack Kevorkian, the doctor who assisted in patient suicides, or euthanasia. Contemporary examples take us through the trials of Saddam Hussein, and Slodoban Milosevic. Seven of these trials are taken through a simulation, imagining if these were conducted today. How modern laws would have been applied and most importantly, how the media, and especially social media, would have reacted.

Books about the judiciary are usually boring. This book is the opposite. It is novel in both topic and approach and reads like a suspense novel. Facts, stories, historical references have constructed a puzzle of two pieces by amalgamating these – at least in our mind till now – disjointed practices. Whether the objective is to learn, or just for pure pleasure, this book is a must to read.