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## Lawyers are dressing way too casual during Zoom court hearings, judge says

BY DEBRA CASSENS WEISS ([HTTPS://WWW.ABAJOURNAL.COM/AUTHORS/4/](https://www.abajournal.com/authors/4/))

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A Florida judge is reminding lawyers appearing in remote court hearings through Zoom that they should not dress like they are poolside.

Nor should the lawyers remain in bed during the hearings, according to Judge Dennis Bailey of Broward County, who posted his sartorial recommendations (<https://www.westonbar.org/so/61N5VoOJe?fbclid=IwAR3gBGUaUfpC8qs0612nMrw-ISDgZkDFiOiCcKKGXBjd3SDS8PisCrslHN6c#/main>) to the website of the Weston Bar

Association.

The Miami Herald (<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/broward/article241976371.html>) and Local10.com (<https://www.local10.com/news/local/2020/04/13/judge-to-lawyers-please-get-out-of-bed-and-put-on-a-shirt-for-zoom-court-hearings/>) have stories.

“It is remarkable how many attorneys appear inappropriately on camera,” Bailey wrote. “We’ve seen many lawyers in casual shirts and blouses, with no concern for ill-grooming, in bedrooms with the master bed in the background, etc. One male lawyer appeared shirtless and one female attorney appeared still in bed, still under the covers. And putting on a beach cover-up won’t cover up you’re poolside in a bathing suit. So, please, if you don’t mind, let’s treat court hearings as court hearings, whether Zooming or not.”

Bailey also warned that court hearings hosted on Zoom take additional prep work. Exhibits intended to be introduced into evidence have to be provided in advance to the court and opposing counsels. Third-party witnesses who can’t appear on camera to be sworn in by a judge have to have a notary at their location to verify identification and oath.

Also, Zoom hearings take longer than in-person hearings because of audio lag time and people talking over each other, Bailey said.

“Often, lawyers are not looking at their screens but down at their files, their outlines and notes or simply out the window and cannot see the judge is hollering ‘Stop! Stop!’ because an objection has been made and the audio stays with the witness rather than obeying the judge,” Bailey wrote.

Bailey told the Miami Herald that he wears his robe during hearings, and lawyers should show their respect by dressing appropriately.

“You’re going to earn the same amount of respect that you’re shown,” Bailey said. “If you show up in jeans and T-shirt, it’s counterproductive.”

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