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Not: I would request that this letter be read at a meeting of the Cambridge City Council.

174 Grampian Way
Dorchester, Mass. 02125
Sept. 22, 1986

Mayor Walter Sullivan
City Hall
795 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Dear Mayor Sullivan:

I was the victim of a violent assault by a thug of caucasian race, and stocky build, in his early or mid 30's, in Purity Supreme Supermarket in Central Square, Cambridge last Thursday, Sept. 18 at 7:00 p.m. I am an author, and I research my books at Harvard University libraries. I was carrying a book bag on my left arm, and a basket of groceries in my right hand, when I walked by the salad bar at the supermarket, and this individual tossed some white salad dressing on my coat. When I protested this to him, he said, "What do you want to fight?" I said, "No I don't want to fight..." I was thinking to ask him for an apology for this act, which was itself an assault. The next moment, he violently struck me in the face, and knocked me unconscious for several seconds. When I regained consciousness, I saw the two managers, whose names I learned were John Chey and Jerry Blumenthal, wrestling him away from me and out of the store. This creep who had attacked me, waited for me outside the store - presumably to attack me again. The managers called the police, and I called them afterwards, but it took them a full 25 minutes to about 7:25 p.m. to arrive even though the perpetrator waited outside. When they arrived, he took off.

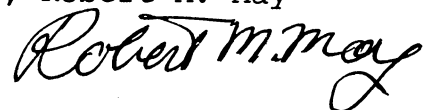
What the police said to me was even more shocking than the attack itself. They said that striking someone violently in the face with a fist was a "mere" misdemeanor in Massachusetts! Since it was a misdemeanor, they could not even make an arrest! They could only ask for his name and address - and he did not even have to give them that under the law! They said that I could have asked for his name and address, as well. How could I get the name and address of a man who was violently striking me??? The police officers said that if they or I was able to get his name and address, I could make a complaint in court. He would be issued a warrant, and if he came in, the judge would probably just give him a "slap on the wrist" (presumably a small fine). I could not believe this and said so. Two of the younger police officers walked off. The older one remained and explained to me how limited the police

were by the laws passed by the Massachusetts legislators!!! I still could not believe that this was the law that would so protect a violent and aggressive criminal, such as the one who slugged me for no reason, or could have slugged an old man or woman, and done them serious bodily injury! The police officer said that if the person dies, then its a felony!!! This is outrageous. If what he says is true, then lawabiding citizens of Cambridge (or other parts of Massachusetts - if this is state-wide - which I find hard to believe) must walk the streets in fear of their lives. An old lady at the store after this incident told me that she walks the streets (only when she has to shop) of Cambridge in fear. She said that she hoped that I would receive some justice, but she doubted it, based upon her experience.

When I asked these three police officers (whose names I did not get - and I was surprised that they do not wear name badges, as is the case in most other localities) what could I do to protect myself against such violent assaults, not being a professional boxer or Karate black belt, they had very little to offer me. If the citizen were to carry any weapon in his or her self-defense, then he or she would be "guilty of a felony." But the criminal can go around assaulting law-abiding citizens on the street, in supermarkets or stores, or almost anywhere, and feel very secure that he will not be arrested or punished for such a crime - presumably a "mere" misdemeanor under Massachusetts law according to these three police officers. This is totally outrageous and means that citizens, such as myself, have virtually no police protection, and criminals such as the one who assaulted me, have very little likelihood of ever coming to justice - or being punished!!! They can even do serious bodily injury to someone, man or woman, old or young, as might result in a fall after being struck in the face or head, and feel practically "immune" from serious prosecution of the law. I still cannot believe this - and will you please check the facts of the law of Cambridge and Massachusetts - and tell me if these police officers informed me correctly. A Lt. Carney, whose name I did get over the phone, at Cambridge Police Headquarters confirmed the version of the law of these three police officers. If this is the law - how in the world can persons such as myself walk around the streets of Cambridge (or other Massachusetts cities if this is state wide - which I find very hard to believe) with any feeling of security or protection of the law at all? I am a resident of Mass. for only three years, and grew up in New York, and spent some years in California, and I assure you that in both of those places assault and battery is a felony - and police arrest such criminals who commit this. Even in Boston, as opposed to Cambridge, there are either policemen or armed security guards in large supermarkets or discount stores - whose presence deters crime - and who make arrests when there are crimes. You have the best universities (Harvard and M.I.T.), but the poorest law-enforcement I have ever seen - in Cambridge, Mass.

Sincerely, Robert M. May

copies to: David Noonan
& Russell Higley,
City Attorney



9.

S-573

Comm. from Robert M. May of Dorchester Re:
his being assaulted on Thursday, September 18,
1986 in the Purity Supreme Market, Central
Square & police response at that time.

In City Council,

September 29, 1986

Referred to the City Manager
for Report
Referred to Police Review Bd.

copy sent to the City Manager 9/1/86 nh