



City of Cambridge

16.

IN CITY COUNCIL

September 16, 1991

COUNCILLOR WALSH
VICE MAYOR REEVES

WHEREAS: The contents of the attached August 6, 1991 letter of Thomas Coates to the Acting Superintendent at the Central Square Post Office suggest strongly that not only are U.S. Postal Service personnel in Cambridge hard-pressed to deliver the mail with efficiency, but are equally hard-pressed to deliver decency and dignity to employees and non-employees of the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS: Had the referenced postal employee's reported racial slur, "black boy", been sprayed as graffiti on the outside of the Post Office building itself, an immediate inquiry would be undertaken to investigate its source and the source's motivation, such must be the same response in this incident where verbal graffiti spoken inside the building must be seen as equally vile as graffiti which might be sprayed on the outside of the building; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council goes on record as deploring this reported incident as totally unacceptable and requests the City Manager forward a copy of this resolution to and invite the Acting Superintendent of the Central Square Post Office and the Boston Division Manager, Mr. Ranft, to come before the City Council prior to October 1, 1991 to explain and respond to Councillors' inquiries regarding this incident, especially as to whether it is a so-called isolated incident or whether it is reflective of an accepted pattern of subliminal racism at the Central Square Post Office.

In City Council September 16, 1991.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joseph E. Connarton".

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk

August 6, 1991

Mr. Leonard Poirer
Acting Superintendent
Cambridge Central Square Post Office
770 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. Poirer:

On August 5, 1991 at about 5:30 p.m., I called the Central Square office to inquire about the non delivery of the regular mail as of that time. I placed similar calls recently and on each occasion some reason was given for the failure and/or delay.

This occasion is unique in that after advising me that the regular carrier was ill, a woman who subsequently on request identified herself as Hellaine Rossi, stated that the mail would be delivered by a "black boy". She repeated this in response to my inquiry!

I stated to Ms. Rossi that my impression was that the Post Office hired adults, who, if they were black males, preferred to be called men. Incidentally the "boy" so identified by Ms. Rossi, advised me that he is thirty-nine years of age!

In these racially tense times, it is absolutely critical, that all persons be respected and not be referred to in derogatory, denigrating or inflammatory terms. Incidentally, color of the carrier is irrelevant!

As you are legally charged with maintaining a work place environment that is free of any such taint and to assure that your peers and subordinates are so informed, I am directing this incident to your attention.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas Coates, j.d.

TC:cmc

cc: Hon. William H. Walsh, Esquire
Cambridge City Councillor
954 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02141



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

(617) 498-9094

William H. Walsh
City Councillor

August 12, 1991

MEMORANDUM:

TO: John Flynn, Deputy City Clerk

FROM: David Noonan, for *DN*
Councillor Walsh

RE: Council Resolution for September 16, 1991
(Central Square Post Office)

Councillor Walsh requests that the enclosed Council Resolution regarding a racial matter at the Central Square Post Office be included in the CONSENT AGENDA for the Council Session marked for September 16, 1991.

As usual, your courtesy and cooperation are appreciated.

(ENCLOSURE)



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Councillor Walsh

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WHEREAS: Had the referenced postal employee's reported racial slur, " black boy " , been sprayed as graffiti on the outside of the Post Office building itself, an immediate inquiry would be undertaken to investigate its source and the source's motivation, such must be the same response in this incident where verbal graffiti spoken inside the building must be seen as equally vile as graffiti which might be sprayed on the outside of the building; now therefore be it

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(ATTACHMENT - letter of
Thomas Coates)



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Consent Order # 16

F-497

VM Reens
Councillor Walsh re: incident at the
Central Square Post Office.

In City Council,

Sept. 16, 1991