



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Mr. Robert W. Healy   
City Manager  
FROM: Commissioner Perry L. Anderson Jr.  
SUBJECT: City Council Order #17 of 9/16/91

DATE: October 24, 1991

REFERENCE:

In response to City Council Order #17 of 9/16/91 regarding college police/security forces in Cambridge, the letter from Mr. Eric Burke was forwarded to Chief Paul Johnson of the Harvard University Police Department in August for investigation and followup.

The Cambridge Police Department has no authority over either campus law enforcement agency in Cambridge. However, meetings are held weekly with both M.I.T. and Harvard Police in order to coordinate activities and share information. Currently, the Cambridge Police Department and the two campus police departments are drafting a mutual aid document which will formally address a number of issues of mutual concern.



# City of Cambridge

17.

IN CITY COUNCIL  
September 16, 1991

## COUNCILLOR WALSH

- WHEREAS: The August 3, 1991 letter which we Council Members received from Eric Burke of Brookline, MA (copy attached) relating an alleged unsavory confrontation with an officer of the Harvard University Police on August 2, 1991 is a matter of intense concern and warrants a thorough investigation and appropriately prompt response; and
- WHEREAS: The issues raised by Mr. Burke in the third paragraph on page 2 of his letter must be addressed thoroughly; now therefore be it
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to invite the Chief of the Harvard University Police to meet with Police Commissioner Anderson as soon as possible and provide a full accounting of his knowledge and investigation of the alleged incident and address the issue of appropriate police conduct as referenced on page 2 of the letter; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager request the Police Commissioner to provide the City Council with a full report on this investigation as well as his best opinion about what means can be initiated for increased dialogue among the various college Police/Security Forces in Cambridge and the Cambridge Police Department at his early convenience.

In City Council September 16, 1991.  
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.  
Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

*Joseph E. Connarton*

Joseph E. Connarton  
City Clerk

Cambridge City Council  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Gave to CC + Mayor  
8/9/91

Eric Burke  
P.O. Box 1828  
Brookline, MA 02144-9998  
August 3, 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

At approximately 11:15 pm, August 2, 1991, my girlfriend, another female friend, and I were walking down Mass Ave. towards Harvard Square. My girlfriend crossed Holyoke Street on the crosswalk and I followed about 20 feet behind her. As I was in the middle of the street a car was coming towards me from Holyoke Street at an unsafe speed for proceeding through a intersection where there is heavy pedestrian traffic, and showed no sign of slowing or stopping. I hurried out of the way and made it to the other side of the street. At that time I noticed that the car that almost hit me was a Harvard Police car (number 296).

The officer then yelled out of his car window "What are you doing asshole? Trying to impress your girlfriend?" I said "I was on the crosswalk." He yelled back that I was "crossing against the light". I did not respond to this, and said nothing more to the officer. I continued walking down Mass Ave, and the officer drove along side me in his car yelling, "You want to push it!?! Huh?!? Come on! You want to push it!?! Let's go! Come on!...." in a very threatening manner and gesturing with his arm which was out of the window. I made no reply to the officer out of fear for my safety.

After traveling half the distance to Dunster Street, in front of the Au Bon Pain, the officer stopped yelling and pulled ahead of us and turned down Dunster Street. We then stopped so I could regain my composure and wait for the officer to get further away, as we were very intimidated and felt very threatened by the officer. So much so that 45 minutes later when my girlfriend spotted a Harvard Police car heading towards us she thought the officer was "coming back to get us", I didn't relax until I noticed the car was a different number.

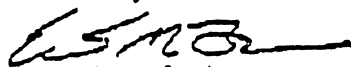
The Harvard Officer is, in my opinion, not fit to be in charge of public safety. He verbally assaulted me, threatened me, scared my girlfriend and my friend, and showed the attitude of a street punk in the way he was urging me to "Come on!" and "let's go!".

I highly recommend his dismissal before he acts out against someone and causes harm to an innocent individual. If this officer reacted so violently towards me, I would hate to see how he would react in a more serious situation.

I understand that Harvard Police Officers are given full police powers on and off of Harvard University property. I do not feel that an unregulated private organization should be allowed to have its private police force harass, intimidate and threaten members of the public. I was in great fear for my safety that night and as I write this letter, committing myself to having this officer removed, I fear for my safety once again. However I can not sit back and wait for this human timebomb to explode, for if I don't act his future actions will be my responsibility, and now, if you don't act his actions shall be your responsibility.

Here is a description of the officer in case he can not be identified by his Car Number 296, and the fact that he was working at 11:15pm, Friday, August 2nd. He was about 25-30 years old, had short <to the top of the ears> dark blond hair, a beard, and a muscular build. I can and will personally identify this officer if requested.

Very Sincerely,

  
Eric Burke

CC:  
Mayor Alice Wolf  
Sheriff John McGonagale  
Cambridge Police Advisory Board  
Harvard Police Department  
Cambridge City Council  
Cambridge Police Department  
Harvard University



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300  
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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
ROBERT W. HEALY  
City Manager

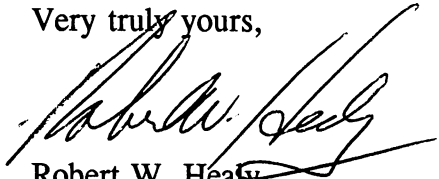
RICHARD C. ROSSI  
Deputy City Manager

November 4, 1991

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 33, regarding college police/security forces in Cambridge, received from Police Commissioner Perry L. Anderson, relative to this matter.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mev  
attachment

1  
CONSENT AGENDA 4

S-1219

Awaiting Report Item Number 33 regarding  
college police/security forces in  
Cambridge.

In City Council,

Nov. 4, 1991

11/4/91 No action taken

11/18/91 Placed in file