

FOR RELEASE: 6 P.M., Sunday, May 14, 1972

Contact: Prof. William C. Whitford, 262-2441, 255-9950

Twenty-eight members of the University of Wisconsin Law School Faculty have sent an open letter to United States Attorney John Olson. The letter calls on Olson "personally to insure that the many charges of police assault" that have grown out of the confrontation of law students and police on the steps of the U.S. Court House last Wednesday, May 10th, "are thoroughly investigated and, where appropriate, vigorously prosecuted."

Signors of the letter included many of the most distinguished members of the Faculty. They included Dean Spencer L. Kimball, Professors Willard Hurst, George Bunn, Arlen Christenson, G.W. Foster, Jr., Frank Remington, William Gorham Rice, and many others.

The letter notes that many responsible students and faculty "have made written statements testifying to numerous unprovoked assaults by federal and local police officials on participants in the demonstration." The letter notes that many students have been charged as a result of the incident, and concludes that "in the name of equal protection of the law" police officers committing criminal offenses, such as unprovoked battery, should also be charged.

The letter notes that U.S. Attorney Olson has indicated that charges of police misconduct can be filed with the FBI. The letter asks that Olson "personally insure" that the charges are investigated and prosecuted.

The text of the letter and the full list of signors follows:

"To: U.S. Attorney John Olson

We are faculty members at the University of Wisconsin Law School. We note that, as a result of the confrontation of law students and police in front of the U.S. Post Office (Monona Avenue) on Wednesday, May 10, 1972, several law students have been charged with disorderly conduct, and there are good prospects that one or two other law students will be charged with battery on a police officer.

As a group we cannot express any opinion about the validity of these charges. As lawyers, however, we revere one of the basic axioms of our Constitution: equal protection before the law. A large number of responsible students and faculty at the Law School have made written statements testifying to numerous unprovoked assaults by federal and local police officials on participants in the demonstration. Just as battery on a police official by a civilian is a criminal offense, so is unprovoked battery on a civilian by a police official a criminal offense. These batteries by police

officers are alleged to have occurred on federal property. They are, thus, if they occurred, either violations of the federal criminal statutes protecting citizens' civil rights, or federal offenses under the same 'assimilated crimes' statute (18 U.S.C. §13) under which a number of our students have been charged.

The newspapers report that you have indicated all charges of police misconduct can be made to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Police misconduct is among the serious crimes in a free and democratic society. Moreover, in times like these it is specially important that law enforcement agencies appear to be acting in an even handed and fair manner. In the name of equal protection of the law, therefore, we call on you personally to insure that the many charges of police assault that have been made are thoroughly investigated and, where appropriate, vigorously prosecuted."

William C. Whitford

Ted Finman

Robert B. Seidman

James B. MacDonald

Marygold S. Melli

Joel F. Handler

Warren Lehman

Willard Hurst

Orrin L. Helstad

Samuel Mermin

Zigurds L. Zile

Allen Redlich

George Bunn

Spencer L. Kimball

John E. Conway

John C. Stedman

William A. Clune

Arlen Christenson

Thomas C. Heller

Neil K. Komesar

August Eckhardt

Frank J. Remington

Walter B. Raushenbush

Abner Brodie

William G. Rice

Edward L. Kimball

G.W. Foster, Jr.

Gordon B. Baldwin