

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

*Leadbey*

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*Dear John,***ARREST AND ALLEGED ASSAULT ON GERRY BROWN**

I thought I should let you know about an incident which is alleged to have occurred yesterday afternoon and which is attracting publicity in the Republic today.

The story I have is as follows. Mr Brown, a passenger on the lunchtime flight from Dublin to Liverpool, was asked with others to complete a disembarkation card. He did so, albeit reluctantly. He failed to complete it properly and when this was pointed out to him by a policewoman, he shoved her. She arrested him for disorderly conduct and he was taken to Belle Vale police station.

Once there, he apparently apologised for his behaviour. He was released with a caution (having admitted assaulting a police officer in the course of her duties) at 3.26pm. He was in custody for about 2 hours in total.

In the small hours of this morning, Mr Brown walked into a different police station and alleged that he had been assaulted by Special Branch officers. He made a formal complaint which is now being investigated. The enclosed background note sets out the details.

Mr Brown has told his story to the Irish media: it received wide coverage and has provoked something of a storm of criticism in the Republic. I gather that 3 TDs have tabled a motion calling for the issue to be debated during tonight's adjournment debate in the Dail. Their wish is likely to be granted.

Lines to take on the incident are attached. The key messages are, of course, that there are mechanisms for dealing with complaints of this sort; that they have been activated; and that we cannot properly comment on the substance until the outcome of the investigation is known. It is likely that the Police Complaints Authority will itself supervise the investigation into Mr Brown's complaint.

I will keep you informed of significant developments. I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to Ken Lindsay for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

*yours sincerely,  
Ken Sutton*

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