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# UMass, prosecutor look into Camby's allegations

**INVESTIGATIONS:**  
Camby's friend has admitted to accepting gifts from an agent

AMHERST, Mass. (AP) — The University of Massachusetts and a Connecticut prosecutor today geared up separate inquiries stemming from All-American Marcus Camby's reported admission that he accepted improper gifts as a player.

The reports have deeply shaken the high-profile basketball program that held the No. 1 ranking for most of last season. One sports administrator on campus today voiced frustration with the campus' power to push forward its investigation.

"We have no subpoena power, and that's one of the things that will hinder the investigation," said Jeff O'Malley, who monitors NCAA compliance for the campus. "You could go knocking on doors, and if the person doesn't want to talk to you, you can't do anything about it."

The university would likely escape regular season sanctions unless it is shown that school officials knew about improper gifts.

But, the NCAA could erase the team's postseason tournament record and take back shared playoff revenue if an ineligible player was used, according to Bill Saum, an NCAA staffer in Overland Park, Kan.

Meanwhile, Connecticut's top prosecutor was looking into whether a would-be sports agent in Hartford committed extortion in a failed effort to attract Camby as a client.

Chief state's attorney John M. Bailey said Tuesday that the preliminary investigation will focus on lawyer-agent Wesley S. Spears.

In an interview with his hometown paper, *The Hartford Courant*, the 6-foot-11 Camby tearfully admitted accepting jewelry worth \$5,300 from Spears. But, he said the jewelry was given to him by two friends, who only later told him Spears had paid for it.

Camby returned to Hartford on Tuesday night from Rosemont, Ill., where he had an NBA

physical. He was met by a crowd of reporters at the Hartford airport, but he refused comment.

Meanwhile, his friend Tamia Murray, who admitted accepting gifts from an agent and passing them on to Camby, told a Hartford television station Camby should not be blamed.

"Marcus had no knowledge of what had happened," Murray told WFSB-TV. "Mainly it was all on me."

UMass basketball coach John Calipari said that unscrupulous agents try to compromise top players by using their friends or family members, then blackmail the player into accepting their representation.

"What they do is they set up your friends, they set up your family and then they say, 'If you don't go for me, I'm going to the newspapers.' And Marcus didn't go with the guy," Calipari told Boston's WEEL-AM.

In the interview, Camby also said he took "a couple thousand" from Signature Sports agent John Lounsbury in the summer of 1995. Lounsbury called the allegation "ludicrous" but refused to elaborate.

Spears' lawyer, Alphonso Tindall Jr., said in *The New York Times* the blackmail charge is "utterly ridiculous and false."

The lawyer said Camby encouraged his client to become an agent, and Spears now intends to sue the player.

Spears has declined comment. Massachusetts athletic director Bob Marcus said sports administrators had no reason to think Camby was taking gifts.

"I think this represents the relentless pressure and pursuit of certain players," said Marcus, who also blamed the problem on a "disgruntled" agent who wanted to sign Camby.

Camby, a player of the year who led Massachusetts to the NCAA semifinal in March, is giving up his senior year and entering the June 26 NBA draft. He is projected as one of the first three picks.

According to NCAA enforcement officials, illegal player-agent contacts are rising. From 1989 to 1994, there were nine reported incidents. In 1995, there were 17.

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