

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Plantation, Florida [REDACTED]

10141074

Tel: [REDACTED]

October 15, 2005

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20590

2005 OCT 25 PM 3:27

Re: Safety issue- Mercury Grand Marquis

Gentlemen:

I own a 2000 Mercury Grand Marquis, VIN # 2 M E F M 7 5 W X [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] In May and June of this year I experienced a problem with the engine which resulted in several complete engine shut-downs, two of which occurred on the Florida Turnpike. Of course the shut-downs also resulted in the loss of power brakes and steering.

The cause of this problem was determined to be a single shorted spark plug on the No. 4 cylinder, which totally confused the power control module (computer). This is clearly a design flaw which could result in serious accidents.

The attached copy of my letter to the Ford Motor Company and its Chairman/CEO describes the problem in greater detail. I sent this letter to Ford three times, on June 28, July 21<sup>st</sup> and August 14<sup>th</sup> of this year and have never been favored with a reply or acknowledgement.

I am now once more sending this letter to Ford by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested. I am also copying them this letter.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

CC: Mercury Division, Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, MI

[REDACTED]

*Armani*  
10/21/05

[REDACTED]  
Plantation, Florida [REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED]

August 14, 2005

Mr. William Clay Ford  
Chairman and CEO  
Ford Motor Company  
1 American Road  
Dearborn, MI 48126

Dear Mr. Ford:

On June 28, 2005 and again on July 21 I mailed the attached letter describing problems with my 2000 Mercury Grand Marquis to your Mercury Division and to the Customer Relationship Center- Ford Motor Company. To date I have not been favored with a response, not even a boilerplate letter.

I think my letter addresses some significant issues and deserves a thoughtful and reasonably timely response. I'm disappointed by the Ford Motor Company's apparent disinterest.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Enclosure: Copy of June 28 / July 21 '05 letter to Ford Motor Company

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Plantation, Florida [REDACTED]  
USA

Tel [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Fax [REDACTED]

June 28, 2005 / JULY 21, 2005 / AUG 14, 2005 / OCT 15, 2005

Mercury Division- Ford Motor Company  
P.O. Box 1304  
Dearborn, MI 48121

Re: Problems with 2000 Mercury Grand Marquis –  
Mileage approx 57,000  
VIN: 2 M E F M 7 5 W X [REDACTED]

Gentlemen:

This will confirm my telephone conversation today with your Customer Service representative. The following will provide more detailed information of my problems.

The problem began in May '05 when the engine began mis-firing. I took the car to our local mechanic who serviced the fuel injection system and installed a new set of platinum spark plugs .

The engine then ran smoothly, but on the second drive after the repair the car seemed to hesitate, there was a loud, long electronic "beep" and the Traction Control light came on. But the engine seemed to run smoothly.

The following day the same thing occurred (with my wife driving) but this time the engine died. Initially, efforts to restart were unsuccessful- the starter cranked but the engine did not start. After a few minutes rest, the engine started normally.

On May 31 I took the car to Plantation Ford and explained the problem, including the previous servicing by our local mechanic. I left the car and a few hours later was phoned by our Advisor, Manny, who said they were getting "Strange readings" on the diagnostic computer and an "uneven fuel flow". He didn't know what the problem was but suggested changing the fuel pump, cleaning the fuel injection system and cleaning the EGR

valve. He also suggested changing the spark plugs. I said the fuel injection system had just been cleaned and the plugs were new. I told him to hold off, I would come over.

My wife and I went to Plantation Ford and Manny said the problem could only be diagnosed if the strange sequence recurred, (the hesitation, "beep" and Traction Control light), if the engine was not shut off, and the car was then connected to the diagnostic machine. (I later learned this was not so). Therefore, we went on a test drive with the technician who had worked on the car. My wife went along on this drive. Naturally, the problem did not recur then.

But during the test drive I asked the technician about Manny's recommendation to change the fuel pump. The technician told me that fuel pumps commonly failed and that they "were all the time changing fuel pumps on police cars". For this reason only, I agreed to incur the expense of changing the fuel pump. I knew that police cars in our area were almost all Ford Crown Victorias, very similar to our Grand Marquis.

The fuel pump and fuel filter were changed (they apparently forgot about the EGR valve) and I paid \$871.06. The problem of course continued.

I later learned from the Broward Sheriff's Office, the Plantation Police Department and from Armstrong Ford of Homestead FL, that fuel pumps are very rarely replaced on these cars.

A few days later my wife was driving the car when the problem again occurred (hesitation, "beep" and Traction Control light) and she phoned me to suggest taking the car to Plantation Ford and hooking it up to the diagnostic computer before shutting off the engine, as per Manny's advice. I phoned Manny who said to bring the car over which my wife did. They connected it to the diagnostic computer, copied down some codes but were still scratching their heads.

Manny said he would investigate the diagnostic codes and get back to us. He never did. So on June 14 (2 weeks later) I phoned Plantation Ford and spoke with Rick Zarkowski (who said he was the service manager). I explained the problem and Rick promised to speak with Manny and get back to me. (He didn't).

The following day I was driving south on the Turnpike to Homestead when the problem recurred and this time the engine died (as it did once before with my wife). Luckily, I was in the right lane and stopped on the shoulder. Initially, the starter cranked but the engine did not want to start. I waited a few minutes and it started. I continued to Homestead and the car began to hesitate more frequently. Before reaching Homestead the engine died once more.

I took the car to Armstrong Ford of Homestead. Went for a test drive with Advisor, Hector Gonzalez, who noted the symptoms. We discussed the problem with the technician who would work on it, Richard Brady. They could start working on it the following morning. I rented a car and drove home.

The following afternoon Mr. Gonzalez phoned to say the car was repaired. The cause of the problem was the spark plug on No. 4 cylinder which had an internal short!

In Homestead, Mr. Brady explained that the Power Control Module became confused with signals it was receiving from the engine and tried to compensate which affected other systems and a sort of chain reaction occurred, resulting in the car's symptoms and engine failures. It took him several hours of trouble-shooting as he had not seen this problem before. I was glad to pay Armstrong Ford \$338.33 of which the total parts cost was \$6.50 for one platinum spark plug.

The purpose of this letter is threefold:

1) There is something very wrong with a diagnostic system and a Power Control Module when a simple bad spark plug can cause so much confusion and expense. Plantation Ford totally failed to diagnose the problem and it was even a challenge for the knowledgeable technician at Armstrong Ford of Homestead.

It looks to me like a software problem, or some other design flaw, which should be corrected by Ford.

Engine failure is a safety issue as power steering and power brakes are both lost. A person, especially a woman, going down a hill could easily be unable to stop the car. Steering is very difficult. And being stalled on a highway in traffic is very hazardous.

- 2) I agreed to needlessly have fuel pump replaced (an \$871 expense) because I relied on false information from the Plantation Ford technician. He told me during the test drive, in the presence of my wife, that they were "all the time replacing fuel pumps on police cars" which I knew, were similar to my Grand Marquis. As stated above, I later learned that this was untrue.

When I asked for a partial refund from Mr. Philip Cici, Plantation Ford's Service Manager, he totally rejected my request.

I have also written a letter to Mr. Cici asking that he reconsider. I would prefer to resolve this matter amicably.

- 3) I would like to compliment and thank Armstrong Ford of Homestead especially Mr. Richard Brady and Mr. Hector Gonzalez, for the professional and ethical manner in which they solved my problem.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CC: General Manager, Plantation Ford  
General Manager, Armstrong Ford of Homestead

[REDACTED]