NYC's police force under fire for murder of immigrant

FEBRUARY 17

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Index Staff

In the past couple of years the American people have been faced with one of those nagging eternal questions: what is the meaning of justice.

From the O.J. Simpson trial to the Oklahoma City bombing, from the sanctions on Iraq to the Lewinsky scandal, the world has watched as its institutions command the American people of the victim. Aiming an unmarked car, the officers were on the lookout for a rapist reported to them. Amadou Diallo, the world has watched as the officers' union lawyer, the men believed Diallo to fit the police sketch of the suspect.

Although all four officers had their badges out and identified themselves as police officers, the victim did not seem to understand their shouted commands and was trying to understand their shouted commands.

When interviewed with law enforcement officials, lawyers were noted to have maintained their description of the victim.

At approximately 12:40 a.m., four plain-clothes officers from the elite Street Crime Unit turned on to Wheeler Ave. in the Soundview section of the Bronx in New York City. Driving an unmarked car, the officers were on the lookout for a rapist reported to them. When they spotted Diallo in the vestibule of his apartment, the officers opened fire, killing him for a gun. Yet such an explanation cannot reasonably account for the immensity of their aggression.

So far, none of the police officers have issued any statements concerning the event, and they have not been questioned since that painful night. As a result, indignant suspicion has arisen in the minds of Diallo's family, their lawyer, and the community as to the actions and intentions of the New York Police Department. Worth described an interview with an officer as "dodgy," citing their awareness of the right to refuse self-incrimination.

Despite this situation, three theories have developed in attempts to explain the mysterious occurrence.

Firstly, all of the officers may have decided that they were being attacked when some of their bullets ricocheted off the wall directly behind Diallo.

A second theory suggests that, due to the clean entrance and exit of the bullet, the victim did not collapse right away.

Additionally, some are advancing a third theory claiming that the men may have believed at the time that McMellon had been hit by gunfire when he fell back on the stairs.

Complicating the matter further is the ethnicity of the victim. Amadou Diallo was a black West African immigrant. The officers are white.

The official word from the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety Criminal Investigation Division regarding closure of the investigation into last Sept.'s hate letter and fire reads: "The investigation into last Sept.'s hate letter and fire is closed. Detectives have been unable to develop any suspects possibly involved in the distribution of the hate letter that had been received by the Kalamazoo College Student."

We had hoped that the person or persons responsible for these actions would be identified and arrested. Unfortunately, the investigation was not completed, and the police have not speculated about possible suspects in this case.

If new information leads police to reopen the investigation, the College will cooperate fully.

Letter to the Editor—Not to be offended — a right?

The open letter from the Kalamazoo College has not and will not speculate about possible suspects in this case.

According to the facts, Diallo offended officers of New York City's Street Crime Unit for grounds for apprehension or suspicion. At the time of the attack, he was standing, unarmed and silent, in the vestibule of his own residence, bothering no one. His neighbors described him as a very mild-mannered man. The American justice truly blind, as we know of her own negative opinion.

We were trying to engage in an open dialogue! A lot of us were trying to tell President Jones that we thought that he was wrong. Granted, there were a few students who did not agree. We are free to disagree and engage in open and responsible dialogue.

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President James F. Jones Jr.