Administration of Justice 001

**Case study 1.1 Police Brutality in New Orleans**

March 1990 Mr. Archie, and African American, was injured in an incident which police claimed he shot and killed a white police officer during a downtown shootout. Mr. Archie was later to die himself in circumstances that are still far from clear.

Transporting Mr. Archie to the hospital after the shooting of police took 12 minutes, however the distance was only 7 blocks. When he arrived at the hospital about 100 officers were present, having heard about the death of their fellow officer. While Mr. Archie was being taken to the hospital, police radios were used to utter death threats against him, and by those officers who accompanied him to the hospital.

According to their account, they decided not to take him to that hospital, and instead of taking him to a different hospital, they took him to the police station where the deceased officer had worked. Here, officers reported there was a scuffle involving Archie and he fell, causing blood stains on the floor. However, the sergeant at the police station denied seeing either Mr. Archie or the officers did not ask about the blood stains, but simply ordered that they be cleaned up.

When Mr. Archie finally got medical treatment it was clear that he had been severely beaten, but no officers were held responsible. At the hospital, Archie’s X-rays of his injuries disappeared, and staff were unable to record details of Archie’s name and background. He was injected with iodine, to which he was alleged to be allergic; for other accounts by pathologist reported that he had been beaten to death.

Ultimately his death was reported as a “homicide by police intervention” by the coroner. Within hours of his death, police Superintendent Woodfork cleared all officers involved in the incident of any violations of conduct. Reportedly, the rookie officer who arrested Archie was pilloried by fellow officers for not killing Archie on the spot.

Subsequently, in May 1990, a report by the advisory committee on human relations found that some officers had brutalized Archie, and that the department had failed to hold him accountable. The committee noted the existence of a police code of silence that was supported by the highest levels within the department.

(Source: Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org/reports/98/police/uspo93.htm.)