Jordan Beveridge No reason for death

A man who is lost in a strange town is quickly approached by a police officer who kills the man as he feels threatened from what could have happened next. Who is at fault?

The short story “Identities” written by W.D Vagardson takes place in 2006 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The man that feels as if his life at home is boring and not what he pictured as his ideal lifestyle gets lost while driving in a small town. A police officer confronts the man as if he had done something wrong, which is when he gets shot by the officer when he fails to reach for his wallet in his shirt pocket. Was the police officer justified when he killed the man?

The police officer was not justified because even though he was putting his safety as the first priority, he was not well trained enough to do what he had done “When the officer, who is inexperienced, who is nervous because of the neighborhood (pg. 3)”. The police officer was trained to pay more attention to those that felt more like a threat and that had a certain look to them “who is suspicious because of the car and because he has been trained to see an unshaven man in blue jeans as a potential thief (pg. 3)”. He did not have evidence that the man was going to cause any harm to anyone or anything around him, and he could have investigated the situation around him before coming to a conclusion. He thought that the innocent man was suspicious based on his appearance, the car he drove and of the unacquainted town that made him nervous to be involved in. The police officer was very inexperienced and had no evidence that the man was going to cause any harm around him which made it worse that he had judgments about the man. He was scared and felt he needed to protect himself from danger but if that were the case he could have called for back up. He needed to look more into the whole thing more before making a huge action because he looked like he was from the bad side of town, when really he was a wealthy man that was bored with his own life and wanted to go for a drive to get away from his own life, even if it was just for a bit. Everyone is capable of hurting people or breaking the law, but accusing someone of being a threat based off what they look like or because of the area that they are in with no evidence is not the correct thing to do as a trained police officer. As a police officer you try to do your best at protecting the people around you, as well as yourself. It’s one thing to feel unsafe or threatened but there were more options in that type of situation. He could have asked for help if he really believed he needed it. If a different type of person was in that town, the police officer would have not confronted them as if they were doing something wrong. If the man did not raise his hands when asked than the police should have been aware of that and called for back up. Just because you look a certain way does not mean that he can not have a certain lifestyle. The officer made a decision based on his best judgement in the moment but had no evidence to prove anything and his assumptions were incorrect from not getting enough information.