Facts before feelings

Today, talking about these topics are sensitive and bring up many emotions, but the emotions brought up from these topics must be put to side as we look at the facts told throughout the story to see if this incident is justifiable or not.

Identities by W.D Valgardson takes setting in a problematic neighborhood and takes place in North America during the 1980’s. A police officer is given the job to locate a potential suspect accused of theft and has orders to arrest him. Complications arrive when the suspect refuses to communicate with the police officer. After asking multiple times without reply, the police officer becomes suspicious of the man, and pulls his gun out in thought that this might be him. The man suddenly turns around and reaches for his pocket. In the moment, the police officer thinks that this could be a threat and what the man reaching for was a gun. He pulls the trigger and kills the man. Afterword’s, it’s found out that the potential suspect was innocent, and he was actually just reaching for his wallet in his pocket ready to show the officer his ID. The big debate is whether the police officer was justified or not.

The police officer’s actions were justified. Taking into consideration the environment, the communication between the officer and the civilian, and the training history of the officer at the time, the incident that took place during the book was justified and backed up by information mentioned throughout.

This is how officers are trained to react in these types of scenarios, and for good reason. The number of uncalled shootings that happen are more common when the civilian you are dealing with refused to communicate. He didn’t do it because he was a bad person, in the officer’s mind, this was a threat and it was either his life or the other person. When you look at it from the point of what we saw, the chance of it being a gun was very high considering the neighborhood and the behavior of the man. In addition, in these types of situations, too much thought is not required because a life can be taken. You have to go based off of the information that is presented in front of you, not how you feel about it emotionally. In the officer’s case, this information was the type of respect the civilian had with him and what actions he took in response to the officers’ responses. Furthermore, the type of neighborhood played effect too. The setting was important as the officer’s reaction would vary depending on the region. Maybe in nicer areas of the country/state/city this type of reaction wouldn’t happen. Also, in nicer areas, law enforcement would be treated differently and the way the civilian acted might be different. The author mentions this and forms a comparison between the 2 areas. He describes the first neighborhood with words like, “…but the promise of a Saturday liquid with sunshine…” (Valgardson), while describing the second neighborhood using words like: “The gate is double locked…” (Valgardson). Finally, He may have gotten hints from the person he was talking to that this person did not want to comply because of their unwillingness to respond or follow orders. These are clues officers can get from others that may lead them to suspect something suspicious. One thing lead to another and he fired the shot.

Today We would hope that the result would have been different, but taking into consideration the environment, the communication between the officer and the civilian, and the training history of the officer at the time, the incident that took place during the book was backed up and justified.