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Diallo's Deadly Night with NYPD

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Amadou Diallo died in a hail of police bullets in February 1999. The police thought Diallo was a serial rapist who was drawing a pistol against them, but Diallo was an innocent man who was unarmed. The incident has sparked a heated debate over the crime-fighting policies of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and the New York City Police Department.

To understand what has been happening in New York City in recent years, one must examine the relationship between a police officer's authority to search suspects and the legal doctrine of false imprisonment. The legal shield of false imprisonment has been sharply curtailed in recent years by Supreme Court rulings that have expanded the circumstances under which police officers can "stop and frisk" persons.

In 1994 Mayor Giuliani and...

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