

Puerto Rican Hurt at Time Of Newark Clash Is Dead

Newark N.J.

Police Refuse to Link Death of Man Killed by 'Single Blow' and Earlier Slaying to the Four Days of Disturbances

9674 By JOSEPH F. SULLIVAN 96-74

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NEWARK, Sept. 5—A Puerto Rican man died today at Martland Hospital of a "massive skull fracture" suffered Monday at about the time club-wielding policemen were clearing Puerto Rican demonstrators from in front of City Hall and chasing them down Broad Street.

The lead man was identified as David Perez, 30 years old, of 104 Mount Pleasant Avenue. The police today also confirmed the identification of a man killed by a shotgun blast and apparently dumped in a deserted area near the disorders. That body, found Tuesday, was identified as that of Fernando Rodriguez, 23 years old, of 65 South Street.

The police have refused to link the two deaths to the four days of disturbances by members of the Spanish-speaking community, despite witness' accounts of police actions involving both men.

"You could flip a coin on that one," said Hubert Williams, city Police Director, when he was asked at a news conference if the two men had been victims of actions by the police. But he added it would be "speculative and unfair" at this time to blame the police for the deaths.

Inquiries Noted

Mr. Williams said the staff of Essex County Prosecutor Joseph P. Lordi and his own internal affairs division were investigating both deaths as well as complaints of police brutality arising from the round of disorders that began Sunday with a clash between the police and Puerto Ricans attending a festival in Branch Brook Park.

Dr. Rosario Tamburri, an assistant county medical examiner, discounted reports that Mr. Perez had been trampled by a horse. He said death was due to hemorrhaging from a massive skull fracture that extended from the forehead to the back of the skull. He said it was caused by a "single blow" and said he also found bruises on both legs and on the man's stomach.

Luis Perez, 12 years old, of 30 Broad Street, no relation to the dead man but an acquaintance, said he saw Mr. Perez leave a bar near City Hall at about the time police came out of the building to clear demonstrators, some of whom had thrown rocks and bottles at city policemen.

"Perez started to run when a policeman on foot came at him, but then a cop on horseback came toward him," the youngster said. "The horse reared up and knocked him down and the cop then hit him on the head with a club."

Mr. Perez's brother, Pedro, who lives in another apartment at the Mount Pleasant Avenue address, said the dead man, who was married and the father of a 10-year-old girl, had lived in Newark six years.

Mr. Williams said Mr. Perez had an arrest record that included charges of atrocious assault with a gun and attempted rape. He said the only record of police contact with Mr. Perez Monday was when two policemen answered an assist call at Branford Place near Broad Street at 5.30 P.M. Monday and brought the injured man to the hospital.

Slain by Buckshot

The body of Mr. Rodriguez was found Tuesday morning at 9:30 A.M. at New Jersey Railroad Avenue and Murray Street, a deserted area of the city, after the police received an anonymous telephone call. He had been killed by four O-O buckshot in the back, the police said. Mr. Williams said city police use this size pellet in their shotgun.

Mr. Rodriguez, who came to Newark from Puerto Rico a year and a half ago and who had worked on an assembly line at the Mold Cast Manufacturing Company, also had cuts on the back of the head and over his left eye.

Mr. Rodriguez's stepfather, Luis Rivera, said witnesses told him that they had seen the young man being put into a police car at about 11 P.M. Monday.