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## Injustice --The Guardian - Film Reviews, Friday September 28, 2001

Peter Bradshaw

Ken Fero and Tariq Mehmood's documentary - downbeat in manner, polemical in effect - tells a harrowing story. This is the testimony of the families of those people, almost entirely black men from South and East London, who died in police custody in the 90s. As the film continues, a repeat- pattern modus operandi emerges. A twitchy, uncertain police presence on the street; a mysterious death in custody, then the closing of ranks. This has found its logical extension in sabre-rattling threats of legal action by the Police Federation, avowedly on the basis that individual policemen are mentioned, though this is always in the context of rehearsing the details of official inquiries and inquests.

Fero's film highlights the irony that, despite the ostentatious soul-searching that followed the Stephen Lawrence case, the violent deaths of black people while in official custody have been passed over in nervous silence. Injustice places itself deliberately outside this reticent media consensus. It is not clear whether Fero and Mehmood approached police authorities to be interviewed on camera, or if these requests were refused or ignored. At any rate, tight-lipped silence has unarguably been the police strategy the rest of the time, and Fero's film is about giving a voice to the relatives left behind, and their fight for answers, a fight in which they show enormous dignity. Last week, the Ritzy in Brixton, south London, pulled the film on "legal advice" - a piece of self-censorship which will make loyal Ritzy supporters groan. Let's hope the other venues across the UK and Ireland slated to show the film have more self-confidence. As a record of human courage, Injustice deserves to be seen.