The English Legal system professes to have eradicated the injustices of the past, yet it is often the main cause of them. The death of Stephen Lawrence was a tragedy of two levels; firstly there was the loss of a talented a promising young man with his whole life ahead of him. Secondly, there was the grossly inadequate quest for justice that twenty years after his death remained unachieved. After his death, the MacPherson Report of 1998 identified the Metropolitan police as 'institutionally racist . This observation partaken from this particular inquiry is still relatively true. The five arrested for his murder, were all released after arrest due to a lack of evidence. It wasn t until 18 years his death that two were retried, due to a change within the law. The law concerning 'double jeopardy , where a man cannot be retried if acquitted of a crime remained an obstacle to justice prior to 2003.Despite alteration in the 2003 Criminal Justice Act, there is limited scope for justice to be achieved. A stringent test has to be applied by the same system that failed Stephen so badly. This raises the question how effective can such a reform be? The simple answer to this is not very. The law allowed those who committed a serious crime, i.e. murder to be retried upon approval by the Director of Public Prosecutions , and the
Court of Appeal
. They must agree to quash the original acquittal due to the finding new and compelling evidence . This suggests that justice is only available in a narrow spectrum of executive approval. Despite, two of the perpetrators of Stephen s murder being convicted; the three other suspects remained at large. This emphasizes how reluctant the system is to readdress the problems of the past. The problems of the past therefore remain the problems of the future and indeed of the present. The presence of racism within the Police today; stop and searches are a prime example of discrimination and racial prejudice. The MacPherson Report identified the difference, Ethnic minority Britons were subjected to nearly one-and-a-half million more stop and searches in the 10 years after the Macpherson inquiry than if the
police
had treated them the same as white people. These shocking statistics have not changed, for example figures released from the Ministry of Justice show that for 2009-2010, 43,219 black people were searched by Met officers under section 60 of the Criminal Justice Act 1994, compared with 27,217 white people. Other legislation that regulates police powers includes the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.It states that a police officer must have reasonable grounds for arrest . Yet from these figures provided, it would suggest that reasonable grounds is open to racial stereotyping. Lessons therefore appear unlearnt, especially when we regard present cases. Despite the tragic death of his brother, Stuart Lawrence is still subject to racially motivated abuse. He claims to have been stopped over 25 times due to racial profiling. This should be regarded with contempt. However, such racial hatred on behalf of the police has far more sinister consequences. The case of Michael Powell highlights the need for greater awareness of the need for racial objectivity. The jury at the inquest into the controversial death in police custody in 2003 of Michael Lloyd Powell returned a damning narrative verdict and found that the way that he was restrained resulted in his death from positional asphyxia. The frightening fact remained that no single police officer demonstrated remorse for Powell s death, despite being found guilty of it. This remains indicative the lack of change within the legal system, statute law suggests change and objectivity, however common law practices otherwise. Injustice remains greatly integrated within our system, and racism remains only small portions of

it. When are real changes going to come?