

Police Officer Reinstated by Civil Service

The Civil Service Commission has reinstated Police Patrolman Robert F. Blanchard, the officer against whom manslaughter charges were filed and then dropped in connection with the Feb. 26 death of a New Orleans babysitter.

After his reinstatement, in which the department agreed to reinstate him and drop charges, Blanchard resigned from the department and waived his suit for back pay and benefits because of adverse publicity in the case.

The commission had granted the reinstatement however, without passing on the validity of the charges against Blanchard.

The commission took under advisement, pending recommendations of the Fraternal Order of Police, a request by police for injury benefits for men hurt "on the job" but not necessarily while in pursuit of a violator.

Police contend that unless a police officer is injured while in actual "hot pursuit" of a criminal, he currently is not covered for injuries sustained while working.

Most of the commission meeting was taken up with hearing the case of Thomas Fucci and the New Orleans Fire Department.

Fucci appealed to the commission after he was cut in rank from probationary captain to lieutenant and suspended last July after the city alleged he was not home on sick leave July 27 as required and failed to notify the department where he could be reached.

Counsel for Fucci held that Fucci was unaware of the verbal regulation, that he was punished twice for the same infraction, and the punishment was too severe.

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