

The o. j. simpson murder trial research paper

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [The O. J. Simpson Murder Trial](#) \n \t
2. [Selection of the Jury](#) \n \t
3. [Sequestration of the Jury](#) \n \t
4. [The Verdict of the Jury](#) \n \t
5. [Conclusion](#) \n \t
6. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

The O. J. Simpson Murder Trial

“ A great trash novel come to life” (Linder, 2000). This is what the criminal trial of Orenthal James Simpson was referred to as. However it cannot be denied that the American public had been deeply captivated by the trial. Initially, reports of the Murder of the ex-NF: football star’s wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, did not capture the full attention of the people. However, 95 million television viewers did witness the live police chase, with Simpson behind the wheel of his infamous Bronco ride. It was quite the shock when the “ Not Guilty” verdict was read in court on October 3, at 10 A. M. PST by Judge Lance A. Ito's clerk. Till this day, it is still disputed what actually happened on June 12, 1994 sometime after 10 o’clock, the time of the murders. What is even more arguable is why the jury gave a “ Not Guilty” verdict, acquitting the only suspect of the murder case. This is the question this research paper will be exploring, examining and hopefully answering.

Selection of the Jury

The prosecution's decision to file the case in downtown Los Angeles instead of the judicial district where the crime took place significantly affected the jury's racial structure. The Simpson jury wouldn't have comprised of mostly of African-Americans (The Associated Press) if the case had been filed in Santa Monica. According to poll data, a majority of whites believe Simpson was guilty and a majority of blacks believe he was non-guilty (Monagle, 1994). The decision not to file the case in Santa Monica was a drastic mistake made by the prosecution and everything the defense did seemed insignificant because of this mistake. On September 24, 1994, the selection process of the jury finally started in the courtroom of Judge Ito. On that day, there were 250 potential jury members who were asked to complete a questionnaire containing 294 questions and another 1-page "hardship" questionnaire. Many of the potential jurors took almost 4 hours to complete the questionnaire. It took another 2 months until the jury was finally selected. An initial jury that comprised of nine Blacks, two whites and one Hispanic was selected by November 3 (The Associated Press). In the next couple of weeks, fifteen alternate jurors were selected too. The jury gathered in court on December 4 and Judge Ito gave them admonitory instructions.

Sequestration of the Jury

Judge Ito sequestered the jurors to protect them from keen media coverage. This meant that they would not be going to their jobs or seeing their families until they were discharged as the jurors of the case. Jurors were given two days by Judge Ito to get ready and were given maps that directed them to a secret location. From there, they were whisked away by deputies to a

secluded location where they would be closely supervised for the next couple of months. Although Ito's order to sequester the jurors was not surprising, but several jurors were visibly displeased by the news that they were going to have to spend the next months in seclusion, locked up and under constant monitoring. Ito had hesitated when it came to ordering full sequestration, realizing how a group of strangers would be impacted because of prison-like confinement, suddenly forced to spend months of long hours under stressful circumstances. According to legal scholars and attorneys, sequestering a jury makes it more likely that animosities will fester among the members of the jury who do not like each other. Similarly, if members of the jury develop a liking for each other, it can lead to bonding as a result of which cliques are often formed. However, it can be agreed that Judge Ito had little choice (Fleeman, 1995) but to sequester the jurors because of the unexampled media attention focused on the case. In a case such as the O. J. Simpson Murder Trial, the "taint" of publicity could only be avoided by being a social hermit.

The Verdict of the Jury

After O. J. Simpson's acquittal, cries of racial bias that had supposedly taken place in the trial could be heard everywhere, especially from the media. It was said that the jurors in the case acted out of racial solidarity because nine out of the twelve jury members were Black. Alternatively, many argued that the jury acquitted Simpson as a means of "sending a message" that racist practices in law enforcement need to halt. Then again, others simply saw the original verdict as proof of Black emotionality, gullibility, and even stupidity when there was overwhelming evidence that Simpson was guilty. Whatever

the case, it is worth arguing that Simpson may have taken unfair advantage of the racial composition of his jurors, or perhaps most of the jury members were racially biased. Whatever the reason that led to Simpson's acquittal, it is evident that the jury gave the wrong verdict since Simpson confessed to the murders (Bentley, 2011).

Conclusion

In the trial of O. J. Simpson, racism was not limited to just the jurors, but even the police officers in the Los Angeles Police Department had behaved racially, which only added to the controversy of an already controversial case. Although it can be said that the race was not the only factor that influenced the verdict that was given by the jury in the O. J. Simpson case. However, race was indeed one of the major influences that caused the jury to acquit Simpson of the murders he was in fact guilty of committing. The O. J. Simpson Murder Trial is proof of the continuous growth of racism in the United States and how its roots have even spread through the justice system in the country. Although theoretical underpinnings for anti-black and conservative public policy are continuously provided by the racism in the country, the blacks have been transformed into the racist by the state (Chidley, 1995). The polarization of racial attitudes in law enforcement was openly demonstrated in the Simpson trial. No doubt, the trial became the "Trial of the Century" but perhaps it will also be remembered for the racial bias and discrimination, such as the one that led to O. J. Simpson's inappropriate acquittal.

References

- Linder, D. (2000). The O. J. Simpson trial. Retrieved from <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/trials10.htm>
- The Associated Press. (n. d.). Profiles: Who are the O. J. Simpson jurors?. Retrieved from <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/index/nns5.htm>
- Fleeman, M. (1995, Jan 8). Long isolation ahead for Simpson jurors as sequestration nears. Retrieved from <http://community.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/archive/?date=19950108&slug=2098375>
- Monagle, K. (1994). Is justice color-blind?. *Scholastic Update*, 127(6), 27.
- Skolnick, P., & Shaw, J. I. (2010). The O. J. Simpson criminal trial verdict: Racism or status shield?. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53(3), 503-516. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1997.tb02125.x/abstract>
- Bentley, P. (2011, Jun 23). Has O. J. Simpson confessed Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2006908/OJ-Simpson-confessed-Nicole-Brown-murder-Oprah-TV-interview-planned.html>
- Chidley, J. (1995, Oct). The Simpson jury faces the race factor. *Maclean's*. 108(41), 69-70. Retrieved April 4, 2006 from ProQuest database.