

O.j. simpson not guilty essay

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To: Dr. Sirleaf From: Vinita Dixon Topic: Why O. J. Simpson was found not guilty May 12, 2010 Strayer University The double homicide trial of O. J.

Simpson may be over but the speculation of how and why he was found not guilty is still running sky high. Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman were stabbed to death outside her Brentwood townhouse on June 12 1994. Former American football star O. J. Simpson was arrested soon after the killings but insisted from the start he was “ absolutely, 100% not guilty (BBC News, 1995). Exactly what happened sometime after ten o’clock on the Sunday night of June 12, 1994 is still disputed, but most likely a single male came through the back entrance of Nicole Brown Simpson’s condominium on Bundy Drive in the prestigious Brentwood area of Los Angeles. In a small, nearly enclosed area near the front gate, the man brutally slashed Nicole, almost severing her neck from her body. Then he struggled with and repeatedly—about thirty times—stabbed Ronald Goldman.

Ronald Goldman was a twenty-five-year-old acquaintance of Nicole’s, who had come to her condominium to return a pair of sunglasses that her mother had left earlier that evening at the Mezzaluna restaurant (Linder, 2000). Just after midnight, Nicole’s howling Akita, with blood on its belly and legs, attracted the attention of a neighbor, who then discovered the two bodies. The ill-fated investigation of the Brown-Simpson and Goldman murders began.

Nicole Brown Simpson’s ex-husband, former football great and media personality O. J. Simpson, meanwhile, was aboard American Airlines flight #668 to Chicago. Simpson had taken off from Los Angeles at 11: 45 after

receiving a ride to the airport in a limousine driven by Allan Park, an employee of the Town and Country Limousine Company. The limousine had left the Simpson estate on Rockingham Avenue about half an hour late, after Park called to report at 10: 25 that no one answered his ring at the door. Park observed a man he assumed to be Simpson enter his house at 10: 56. Police called Simpson early Monday morning at the O'Hare Plaza Hotel in Chicago, where Simpson had planned to attend a convention of the Hertz rental car company.

When informed that his wife had been killed, Simpson did not ask how, when, or by whom. He did, according to his later testimony, smash a glass in grief, badly cutting his left hand. Prosecutors had a different explanation for the injury. Simpson boarded the next flight to Los Angeles, arriving home about noon to find a full-scale police investigation underway. Police tape stretched across his front gate and cardboard tags marked bloodstains on the driveway. Los Angeles police questioned Simpson for about a half hour that day.

They asked Simpson a number of questions about the deep cut on his right hand. Simpson initially claimed not to know the source of the cut. Later in the interview he suggested the hand was cut when he reached into his Bronco on the night of the murders, and then reopened the cut when he broke a glass in his Chicago hotel room after being informed of Nicole's murder.

From the standpoint of the police, the interview was remarkably inept. Officers did not ask obvious follow-up questions and whole areas of

potentially fruitful inquiry were ignored. So unhelpful was this interview that neither side chose to introduce it into evidence at the trial [(Linder, 2000)]. Police accumulated enough evidence indicating Simpson's guilt in the murders that they sought and obtained a warrant for his arrest. Under an agreement worked out with Simpson's attorney, Robert Shapiro, Simpson was to turn himself in at police headquarters by 10: 00 on the morning of June 17, the day following Nicole's funeral. When Simpson didn't show by the agreed upon time, police told Shapiro that they would be driving to his Brentwood home to pick him up. Sometime after one o'clock, four officers knocked on Simpson's front door. Soon they and Shapiro discovered that Simpson had disappeared-off, it turned out, on perhaps the most famous ride in American history since Paul Revere warned Bostonians of the arrival of the British.

Simpson left behind a letter. Addressed to " To whom it may concern," it had all the markings of a suicide letter. It ended: " Don't feel sorry for me. I've had a great life, great friends. Please think of the real O. J.

and not this lost person. Thanks for making my life special. I hope I helped yours. Peace and love, O. J. " Around 6: 20 a motorist in Orange County saw Simpson riding in the white Bronco of his friend, A.

C. Cowlings, and notified police. Soon a dozen police cars, news helicopters, and some curious members of the public were following in pursuit of the Bronco. The slow-motion chase would finally end with Simpson's arrest in his own driveway. After making the arrest, police discovered \$8, 750 in cash, a false beard and mustache, a loaded gun, and a passport in Cowlings' vehicle.

Orenthal James Simpson's fate became the essential television viewing for the American public while 95 million Americans watched police give chase to his white Ford Bronco on the day of his arrest (BBC News, 1995).

Testimony in the trial took almost nine months, encompassing about 120 witnesses, 45,000 pages of evidence and 1,100 exhibits. The jury was made up of 10 women and two men, comprising nine blacks, two whites and one Hispanic (CNN, 1995). According to media reports, prosecutor Marcia Clark thought that women, regardless of race, would sympathize with the domestic violence aspect of the case and connect with her personally. On the other hand, the defense's research suggested that women generally were more likely to acquit, that jurors did not respond well to Clark's style, and that black women would not be as sympathetic to a white woman as victim. Both sides accepted a disproportionate number of female jurors (Wikipedia, 2010). It was suggested that the biggest mistake of the prosecutor was to pack the jury with black women. It was also suggested that the black women in the jury could see the victim Nicole Simpson (a white woman) as the enemy who has been stealing successful black men away from black women and, therefore, deserved everything she got (Wikipedia, 2010).

Once the trial began, there were other blunders. To name just a few: the decision to have Simpson try the glove used in the murder, the decision to call Mark Fuhrman to the stand, and the strategy of presenting so much evidence from so many witnesses over so many weeks that the case lost much of its force. On July 22, 1994, Simpson answered the question "How do you plead?" at his arraignment with "Absolutely one hundred percent

not guilty, Your Honor. ” Months of discovery, jury selection, and hearings on issues such as whether to permit cameras in the courtroom and the admissibility of DNA test results followed. The opening day of trial–Tuesday, January 24, 1995– finally came. Under drizzling skies, reporters and camera person converged for what writer Dominick Dunne called “ the Super Bowl of murder trials. ” Judge Lance Ito in his opening remarks told those assembled in the courtroom that he expected to see “ some fabulous lawyering skills.

” Christopher Darden led off the prosecution’s opening statement by portraying Simpson as an abusive husband and a jealous lover of Nicole Brown Simpson. Darden told jurors, “ If he couldn’t have her, he didn’t want anybody else to have her. Marcia Clark followed with a statement laying out the facts proving Simpson’s guilt that the prosecution would establish during the trial. The next day Johnnie Cochran gave an opening statement for the defense in which he presented a confused timeline of events and suggested that Simpson was so crippled by arthritis that he couldn’t have possibly pulled off a double murder. Cochran told the jury that the defense would prove that the evidence against Simpson was “ contaminated, compromised, and ultimately corrupted. ” Over the next 99 days of trial, the prosecution put forward 72 witnesses. The first set of witnesses suggested that Simpson had the motive and opportunity to kill.

The second set of witnesses suggested that Simpson had in fact used his opportunity to kill his ex-wife and Ronald Goldman. The first group of witnesses included relatives and friends of Nicole, friends of O. J. , and a 9-1-

1 dispatcher, all produced to demonstrate Simpson's motive and his history of domestic abuse. Nicole's sister, Denise Brown, described seeing O. J.

at the dance recital of his daughter, Sydney, on the day of the murder. She testified that Simpson looked "scary," like a "madman." She told of a dinner attended by her, Nicole, and other friends in whom O. J. grabbed Nicole's crotch and said, "This is where babies come from, and this belongs to me." Tearfully, she told of an incident in which an enraged Simpson picked up her sister and threw her against a wall. Ron Shipp, a friend of O.

J.'s, testified that Simpson told him, "I've had some dreams of killing Nicole." A 9-1-1 dispatcher took the stand so that the prosecution might play for the jury a terrifying 9-1-1 call from Nicole describing an ongoing assault by Simpson. The prosecution next produced a set of witnesses—including limousine driver Allan Park, Kato Kaelin, and officers of the LAPD—to establish a timeline of events that left Simpson with ample opportunity to commit murder. Limo driver Allan Park proved to be one of the prosecution's most effective witnesses. Park testified that he arrived at the Simpson home on Rockingham at 10:25 to pick O. J.

up for his scheduled flight to Chicago. He said he rang the doorbell repeatedly, but received no answer. Shortly before 11:00, according to Park, a shadowy figure, black, tall, about 200 pounds, and wearing dark clothes, walked up the driveway and entered the house. A few minutes later, Simpson emerged, telling Park he had overslept. Park testified that as he entered the limo, he carried a small black bag (which the prosecution hoped the jury would conclude contained the murder weapon).

Park testified that Simpson would not let him touch the bag. The bag has never been seen since. A skycap at the Los Angeles Airport testified that he saw Simpson near a rubbish bin. Simpson house guest Kato Kaelin, one of the trials more colorful characters, testified that he and Simpson returned from a run for Big Macs and french fries at 9: 36. After that, Kaelin couldn't account for Simpson's whereabouts. He told of hearing thumps on his wall just before 11: 00; about the same time that Park witnessed the shadowy figure enter the house.

The prosecution also produced telephone records that show Simpson used his automobile cell phone to call his girlfriend, Paula Barbieri, at 10: 03. The defense did not attempt to explain why Simpson would make a call on his car cell phone at a time he claimed to be in his backyard practicing his golf stroke. Finally, the prosecution began to put forward witnesses directly tying Simpson to the two murders. The evidence was technical and circumstantial, relating mostly of the results of blood, hair, fiber, and footprint analysis from the Bundy crime scene and Simpson's Rockingham home. The most compelling testimony, if one assumed the accuracy of the testing concerned two RFLP tests.

The first indicated that blood found at the crime scene could have come from only 1 out of 170 million sources of blood—and that O. J. Simpson fit the profile. The second came from blood found on two black socks at the foot of O.

J. ' s bedroom. According to prosecution testimony, only 1 out of 6. billion sources of blood matched the sample. Nicole Brown Simpson might well be

the only person on earth whose blood matched the blood found on the socks. On cross-examination of the prosecution's DNA experts, the defense had little choice but to begin to develop the theory that either the blood samples were contaminated or they were planted by corrupt police officers. The LAPD officer who found a bloody glove outside Kato Kaelin's bedroom turned out to be a godsend for the defense corrupt-police theory. The officer, Mark Fuhrman, testified for the prosecution on March 9 and 10.

In his book about the trial, Robert Shapiro wrote: " A suddenly charming Marcia Clark treated him like he was a poster boy for apple pie and American values. " Three days later, F. Lee Bailey began a bullying cross-examination of Fuhrman in which he asked the detective, whether, in the past ten years, he had ever used " the n word. " Fuhrman replied that he absolutely never had done so. It was a lie [(Linder, 2000)]. Prosecutors had contended all along that the murders occurred around 10: 15 p.

m. because that's when Nicole Brown Simpson's dog was heard wailing. Defense lawyers produced witnesses who contradicted that, indicating that the wailing was around 10: 30 p. m. on June 12, 1994 when Nicole Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman were murdered. O.

J. Simpson was seen at 10: 54 p. m. by the limousine driver who was to take him to the airport.

Simpson answered the driver who buzzed him at the gate one minute later. The driver had arrived at 10: 40 p. m. and received no response then (Collier, 1995). Cochran had always contended there wasn't enough time for Simpson

to commit a bloody double murder and get back home, shower and be ready for a flight so quickly. We said that if we could shatter the prosecution's timeline in that O.

J. Simpson couldn't have committed these crimes, then there'd be reasonable doubt. That's even before we got to the socks, the gloves or (Detective Mark) Fuhrman or anything else. If you look at the timeline, O. J. Simpson could not, would not and did not commit these crimes. " The socks Cochran referred to were the bloody socks found in Simpson's bedroom.

Jurors said they questioned whether or not the blood on the socks was planted. A bloody glove was found on Simpson's property, yet no blood was found anywhere around it. Fuhrman was a racist officer who claimed to have found the glove and a speck of blood on Simpson's Bronco Cochran denied that he played the race card in the case. The prosecutors introduced Fuhrman since he was their witness.

Simpson's attorneys pursued Fuhrman's credibility and decided not to call him. " If a man has racist views..

. you have to pursue it because that's part of your job. " Cochran repeated over and over during his closing argument, " if it doesn't fit, you must acquit [(Collier, 1995)]. " The 133 days of televised courtroom testimony turned countless viewers into Simpson trial junkies. Even foreign leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Boris Yeltsin eagerly gossiped about the trial. When Yeltsin stepped off his plane to meet President Clinton, the first question he asked was, " Do you think O. J.

did it (Linder, 2000)? ” Covered and televised by Court TV, and in part by other cable and network news outlets, the trial began on January 25, 1995. Los Angeles County prosecutor Christopher Darden argued that Simpson killed his ex-wife in a jealous rage. The prosecution opened its case by playing a 9-1-1 call which Nicole Brown Simpson had made on January 1, 1989. Nicole expressed fear that Simpson would physically harm her, and he could be heard yelling at her in the background. Dozens of expert witnesses were presented by the prosecution, on subjects ranging from DNA fingerprinting to blood and shoeprint analysis, to place Simpson at the scene of the crime.

The prosecution spent the opening weeks of the trial presenting evidence that Simpson had a history of physically abusing Nicole. Simpson’s lawyer Alan Dershowitz argued that only a tiny fraction of women who are abused by their mates are murdered. On Sunday, February 12, 1995, a long motorcade traveled into Brentwood where the judge, jurors, prosecutors, and defense lawyers made a two-hour inspection of the bloody crime scene, and then a three-hour tour of O. J.

Simpson’s Rockingham estate. Simpson, under guard by several officers but not wearing handcuffs, waited outside the crime scene in an unmarked police car, but was permitted to enter his Rockingham house (Wikipedia, 2010). ” Loads of evidence was presented in the case but it just was not enough to find O. J. Simpson guilty.

DNA showed that blood found at the scene of Brown’s murder was O. J. Simpson’s. The odds it could have come from anyone but Simpson were

reported, incorrectly, to be about one in 170 million. The actual odds of the blood being from someone other than Simpson were much lower, and statistically negligible. DNA analysis of blood found on a pair of Simpson's socks found in his bedroom identified it as Nicole Brown's. The blood had DNA characteristics matched by approximately only one in 9.7 billion, with odds rising to one out of 21 billion when compiling results of testing done at the two separate DNA laboratories.

Each sock had about 20 stains of blood. DNA analysis of the blood found in, on, and near Simpson's Bronco revealed traces of Simpson's, Brown's, and Goldman's blood. DNA analysis of bloody socks found in Simpson's bedroom proved this was Brown's blood.

The blood made a similar pattern on both sides of the socks. Defense medical expert Dr. Henry Lee of the Connecticut State Police Forensic Science Laboratory testified that the only way such a pattern could appear was if Simpson had a "hole" in his ankle, or a drop of blood was placed on the sock while it was not being worn. Lee testified the collection procedure of the socks could have caused contamination. Hair consistent with Simpson's was found on Goldman's shirt.

Several coins were found along with fresh blood drops behind Nicole's condo, in the area where the cars were parked. DNA analysis of blood on the left-hand glove, found outside Brown's home, was proven to be a mixture of Simpson's, Brown's, and Goldman's. Although the glove was soaked in blood, there were no blood drops leading up to or away from the glove.

No other blood was found in the area of the glove except on the glove. The gloves contained particles of hair consistent with Goldman's hair and a cap contained carpet fibers consistent with fibers from Simpson's Bronco. A knit cap at the crime scene contained hairs consistent with Simpson's. Dark blue cotton fibers were found on Goldman, and the prosecution presented a witness who said Simpson wore a similarly-colored sweat suit that night. The left-hand glove found at Nicole Brown's home and the right-hand glove found at Simpson's home proved to be a match (CNN, 1995). The LA County District Attorney's Office and the Medical Examiner's Office could not explain why 1.5 cc of blood were missing from the original eight CCs taken from Simpson and placed into evidence. Officers found arrest records indicating that Simpson was charged with the beating of his wife Nicole Brown.

Photos of Brown's bruised and battered face from that attack were shown. Much of the incriminating evidence: bloody glove, bloody socks, blood in and on the Bronco, was discovered by Los Angeles Police Detective Mark Fuhrman. He was later charged with perjury for falsely claiming during the trial that he had not used the word "nigger" within ten years of the trial. During the trial Fuhrman pleaded the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination to avoid further questioning after his integrity was challenged on this point. The bloody footprints were identified by FBI shoe expert William Bodziak as having been made by a pair of extremely rare Bruno Magli shoes, of which it has been reported that only 299 pairs were sold in the US.

The large size 12 (305 mm) prints matched Simpson's shoe size. In the criminal trial, Simpson defense attorneys had said the prosecution had no proof Simpson had ever bought such shoes, however then free-lance photographer Harry Scull claimed to have found a photograph he had taken of Simpson in 1993 that appeared to show him wearing a pair of the shoes at a public event, which was later published in the National Enquirer. Simpson's defense team claimed the photograph was doctored, although other pre-1994 photos appearing to show Simpson wearing Bruno Magli shoes were since discovered and published. Evidence collected by LAPD criminologist Dennis Fung came under criticism. He admitted to "having missed a few drops of blood on a fence near the bodies," but on the stand he said that he "returned several weeks afterwards to collect them.

"Fung admitted that he had not used rubber gloves when collecting some of the evidence. LA Police Detective Phillip Vanatter testified that he saw photographs of press personnel leaning on Simpson's Bronco before evidence was collected. The jury took less than four hours to reach a unanimous decision in the trial that gripped America for an entire year. Chief prosecutor Gill Garcetti said: "Don't look at this case as being how most cases are handled. Juries do the right thing – nearly all the time (BBC News, 1995)." OJ Simpson was found not guilty of the murders of his ex-wife Nicole and her friend Ronald Goldman. Judge Lance Ito ordered OJ Simpson be released "forthwith" ending 473 days in custody. In a statement, Jason Simpson expressed his father's relief that "this part of the incredible nightmare that occurred is over (BBC News, 1995)".

Jurors speaking after the end of the trial disagreed. Brenda Moran, the first juror to speak out, told reporters that “ we weighed the evidence. We were fair. It wasn’t a matter of favoritism, or sympathy.

It was evidence. ” She said she was troubled by the bloody glove found at Simpson’s estate, pointing out that the glove was soaked in blood but no other blood was found anywhere around. “ No blood on the leaves, on the ground,” she said. So why was there so much blood on that glove and not a drop of blood on the ground anywhere around that pathway [(Collier, 1995)]? ” She also pointed out that she was troubled by lead Detective Phillip Vannatter claiming he went to Simpson’s house shortly after the bodies were found simply to notify him. She also was worried about his carrying Simpson’s blood around for several hours and transporting it from downtown Los Angeles more than 15 miles to the Westside. “ He’s walking around with that blood in his pocket for a couple of hours. Why didn’t he book it at Parker Center (police headquarters) or Piper Tech (a city building downtown).

He had a perfect opportunity to do that [(Collier, 1995)]. ” Another juror, Gina Rossborough, told Oprah Winfrey she felt the glove at Simpson’s estate could have been planted. She also said the prosecution just did not prove its case. | | Prosecuting lawyers produced evidence such as a pair of gloves – one found at the crime scene, the other at OJ’s apartment and emphasized OJ Simpson’s violent relationship with his ex-wife. The defense criticized the integrity of the Los Angeles Police Department, and the authenticity of their evidence.

SumminAs the verdicts were returned, the crowd cheered so enthusiastically mounted police officers struggled to control their horses. The prosecution admitted they were profoundly disappointed with the verdict. Members of the victims' families were distraught: Fred Goldman, father of Ronald Goldman, said the day of his son's murder was the worst day of his life, and today was the second (BBC News, 1995). Although the 1995 criminal trial of O. J. Simpson for the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman has been called " a great trash novel come to life," no one can deny the pull it had on the American public.

At 10 a. m. PST on October 3, Judge Ito's clerk read the jury's verdict of " Not Guilty," 91% of all persons viewing television were glued to the unfolding scene in the Los Angeles courtroom [(Linder, 2000)]. Discussion of the racial elements of the case continued long after the trial. Some polls and some commentators concluded that many blacks, while having their doubts as to Simpson's innocence, were nonetheless more inclined to be suspicious of the credibility and fairness of the police and the courts, and thus less likely to question the outcome.

After the civil trial verdict against Simpson, most whites believed justice had been served and most blacks (75%) disagreeing with the verdict and believing the verdict to be racially motivated. An NBC poll taken in 2004 reported that, although 77% of 1, 186 people sampled thought Simpson was guilty, only 27% of blacks in the sample believed so, compared to 87% of whites. Whatever the exact nature of the " racial divide," the Simpson case

continues to be assessed through the lens of race (Wikipedia, 2010).

Reference