

The Jury Times

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Did the jury perform its job in the OJ Simpson Case?

After more than nine months the jury for the OJ Simpson case took less than a day to decide its verdict. On October 3, 1995 Orenthal James Simpson was announced not guilty of the double homicide charge committed on June 12, 1994. After reviewing the evidence presented and the possible contamination of the evidence, it was clear the jury did perform its duty for this case.

The jury found reasonable doubt because the evidence was contaminated and possibly fixed. From the minute the police discovered the bodies of Nicole Brown, 35, and Ron Goldman, 25, the case had been handled sloppily. The

cops present at the scene denied their hate towards Blacks after being questioned on the witness stand, and then old recordings of racist remarks were later recovered.

There is so much evidence that points to OJ being guilty; however too much of it had been handled wrong. The most obvious evidence pointing to OJ would be the trail of blood from Nicole's house to OJ's home. OJ had taken a late flight to Chicago that night and cut himself on a broken glass that had indeed been identified at the hotel later. This would give reason behind the few drops of blood found on his residence. There remained no explana-



OJ Simpson with his attorney in court

tion for the trail, unless the police had put it there. The lab where the DNA tests were done had a history of contamination; therefore no one is completely sure whose blood it is. After the murder scene had been

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Editors Opinion: Should unanimous verdicts be required in criminal trials?

I believe that unanimous verdicts should be required in criminal cases. If I were on trial facing a long term punishment or even death I wouldn't want a jury to just decide and then make a verdict without discussion. In criminal cases you need a unanimous vote of 12 to 0 in or-

der to rule to verdict. I believe every case no matter what crime was committed there should be some time for the jury to review the case from different perspectives, keeping all evidence in mind.

By reviewing the case and specific evidence there is a chance the jurors



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searched, blood on the gate with EDTA (what is used when testing blood) was discovered. This drew great suspicion of whose blood it actually was and if the police had plotted it.

The police illegally scaled the fence without a search warrant into OJ's home and claimed it was for his own protection. This is supposedly where the match to the bloody glove had been discovered, as well as a bloody sock. It is unclear if the glove was left there by OJ or planted by a racist cop. At the crime scene one of the police officer's had been noted saying "them" when referring to the bloody glove at Nicole's. He claims he was talking about the single glove and

another item close by. When the glove was brought into court and tried on by OJ it didn't fit him.

The bloody sock that was found at OJ's home was observed and there was so much blood it leaked on three sides of the sock. When it had been first found there was no recognition of blood on it, especially not at that amount. If OJ had indeed been wearing the socks, the blood couldn't have possibly soaked through his skin and onto the other side. This piece of evidence also raised reasonable doubt that OJ was not guilty after all. These few mistakes were what made the jury very skeptical of what really happened that evening and following

days of the murder. It became apparent to them that this case had enough reasonable doubt, enough uncertainty that OJ had not committed this crime and to declare his freedom.

(editor's opinion continued from page 1)

could discover reasonable doubt. If there is any uncertainty about the case the verdict could be postponed or altered to a less severe punishment. In all fairness it gives the defendant one last chance before their punishment is made final.

In a group of twelve people, one person can hold back the entire decision by voting against it. This allows the group to share their reasoning and hear what each individual's thoughts are. Since the jurors need to have all twelve people vote for one resolution they could be at variance for a long time until one decision is agreed upon by everyone.

There is usually no limited amount of time for the jury to decide, therefore there is no reason why they shouldn't be able to talk about and review the case before ultimately deciding. By talking the jurors learn why each person feels a

certain way, and if there are any bias opinions they can be discovered and hopefully be persuaded to take a more open look on the case.

I think it is only reasonable to have a unanimous verdict in criminal cases, and as jurors they owe it to the prosecutor and defendant to not take their job lightly, but very seriously and with an open mind.





Photo Gallery



Students voice their opinion on the OJ Simpson case



“I think the jury was right by not convicting him of the murders. I feel bad for the family but I really do think the police plotted the evidence.”



“I think the jury ruled wrong. OJ was guilty, there was so much evidence that obviously led to him. I think the jury made the wrong decision.”



“OJ is guilty. I strongly dislike him and disagree with everything.”



“I have no opinion towards the whole case. I don't think it is anyone else's business.”

Recommended web sites for further information on these topics

<http://www.cnn.com/LAW/>

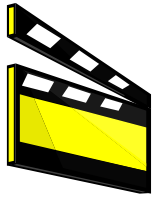
<http://courttv.aol.com/>

<http://www.wagnerandson.com/oj/OJ.htm>

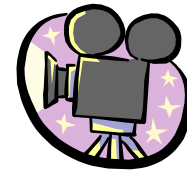
<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/Simpson/simpson.htm>

<http://law.com/>

<http://www.usdoj.gov/index.html>



Movie Review: *12 Angry Men*



The film *12 Angry Men* was about twelve jurors deciding if a young man had killed his father or not, and if thought to be guilty would receive the death penalty. Henry Fonda and Joseph Sweeney played juror seven and eight. Both jurors performed well because they were very realistic for their age and opinions.

Henry Fonda was the thoughtful, middle-aged man of the group who wanted to give the young man on trial the benefit of the doubt. He didn't feel it was right to just send him off to be executed without reviewing the case of in search of any reasonable doubt that he didn't commit this crime. This was very believable because in a 12 to 0 vote there usually are disputes and discussions before the final decision is made. He made reasonable explanations about the people who testified, that they could have been wrong. Henry Fonda does an excellent job questioning the assumed actions taken the night of his father's murder. He proposes it would be impossible for the old man to reach the door in fifteen seconds when it is 43 feet down the hall and 12 feet to the door. He is a very intelligent man and proves to be so throughout the entire movie while trying to understand what exactly hap-

pened that night.

Joseph Sweeney appeared late in the movie which could be understandable that elder people can sometimes be forgetful or take longer to get places. He seemed to be calm most of the movie and not get worked up which was realistic. He also was very intelligent from an experienced long-lived life. He notices the glasses mark on another juror when he removes them and recalls the same mark on the woman who testified. Proving it was very doubtful she was wearing her glasses in bed when she supposedly saw the boy kill his fa-



A scene from the moving showing the angry jurors.

ther. Joseph Sweeney is a very good observer and notices little details. He is a kind-hearted man and agrees that it wouldn't be fair to just declare him guilty without a discussion.

If I had been the prosecutor I would have not chose juror number seven, Henry Fonda. He was the only one from the beginning who wanted to work through the case assuming the boy was innocent. Henry was the one man who saved the boy from being executed; if he had not disagreed with the rest of the men they would have just decided he was guilty.

If I had been a juror, I would have voted not guilty. I believe there was enough reasonable doubt to believe he was innocent. There was too much uncertainty towards the evidence to be unsure. Even though the boys explanation of what he did that night and where he had been unclear, so had the witnesses brought in to testify. The woman said she had seen through the train windows the boy stabbing his father. It later became a possibility that she wore glasses, therefore making it highly unlikely in the night to see 40 feet away without her glasses and be sure it was he. With strange assumptions as these are believed

Attributes of Reasonable Doubt Table

Attributes	State vs. Malvo	State vs. Mayfield	Warner vs. Marx
Lack of direct evidence	None	None	None
Insufficient quantity of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -bullet fragments -finger prints -friendship -tip-line -matching bullets -car registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -stopped 18 people with blond hair -long talks -violating procedure -blond hair on bridge -vertical scratches -purple fibers -matching blood test -rope found in car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -inherit mothers money -doctor isn't in the business of killing people -doctor said she is not brain dead
Logical alternative theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -steal car with gun in it -let army buddy use tree stump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lonely officer -liked talking to attractive blond girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -wanted her mother to die without pain



(movie review: 12 Angry Men continued)

to be, there is no way I would choose guilty because there is a possibility he didn't do it due to unclear evidence.

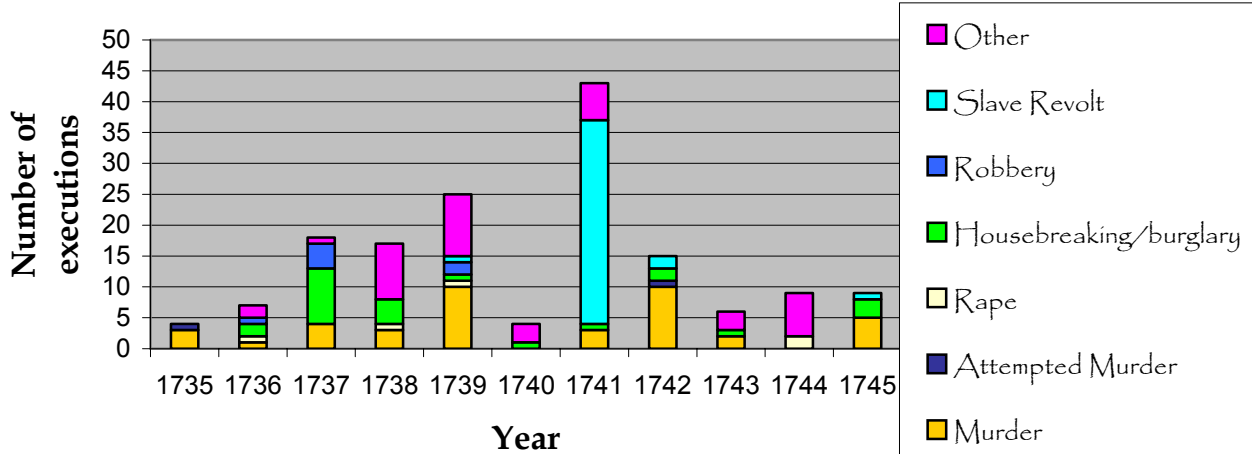
The two most important pieces of evidence were the switchblade knife, and the discovery that the old man physically couldn't have made it down the hall and to the door in 15 seconds. The switchblade knife was said to be the only one of its kind when Henry had found a copy at a pawnshop. Also the way the boy had held the switchblade knife does not follow the way you are supposed to hold it, and if you knew about them you

That makes the possibility of him reaching the door almost impossible with that information. Let alone, when they time themselves they couldn't even make it that far. These two pieces of evidence is what helped created enough reasonable doubt, enough suspicion that the witnesses had been wrong, and the boy was innocent.



Death penalty spike: 1735-1745

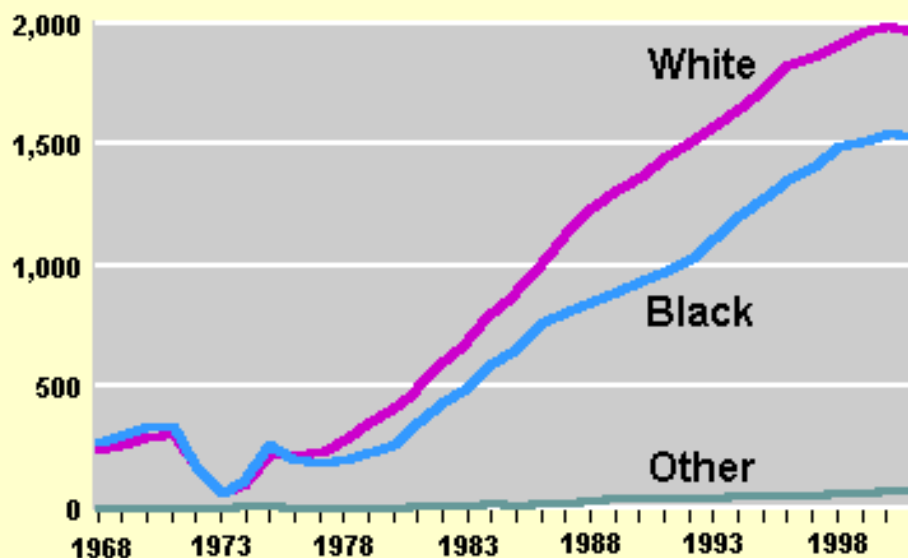
Executions in the U.S 1735-1745



The legend categorizes the different types of crimes committed from 1735-1745. The graph displays the number of executions in a specific year in the time frame.

The Department of Justice Death Penalty

Prisoners on death row by race, 1968-2001



The death penalty was reinstated in 1976 by the Supreme Court. From 1968 until 2001 the majority of the prisoners on death row have been White; followed by Blacks.