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History

Dr. Hanson

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Guilty?

In 1994, the life of football star O.J. Simpson changed forever when the public found out about the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Instantly, O.J. was a prime suspect. Despite the accusations, O.J. was “extremely depressed” and was under the care of a doctor. Also, when the police went through the chronology of the events on the night of the murders, Simpson had a believable story. The murders took place at about 11 P.M., and at the time O.J. was said to be at home waiting to get into a limousine to go catch a flight to Chicago. According to Simpson, he didn’t even find out about the death of Mrs. Simpson until the next morning at 6:15. The only flaw in his story was that he did not say where he was after 6:30 P.M. when he last saw his wife.¹

Faced with a difficult situation, Simpson hired a group of lawyers known as the “Dream Team.” Johnny Cochran was the most well known of the group. O.J.’s trial lasted 133 days, making it the longest in California history. In the end, O.J. was acquitted of murder, claiming that the physical evidence, a bloody glove, was planted. Aside from being a controversial trial based off the evidence, it was also overshadowed by issues of racism. One District Attorney said, “There’s a mountain of evidence pointing to this man’s guilt, but when you mention that word (N-word) to this jury, or any African American, it blinds people. It’ll blind the jury. It’ll blind the truth. They won’t

be able to discern what's true and what's not."² To this day, people instantly associate this trial with issues of racism in the courtroom.

While O.J. Simpson was not convicted of murder, his reputation as a football star is lost. He will always be known for his wild Bronco police chase, and the brutal 133 day trial.

¹ Seth Mydans, "Lawyer for O.J. Simpson Quits Case," *New York Times*, (16 June 1994): A 18. Available from: Proquest, New York Times Historical Collection, Menlo School Lib. < <http://library.menloschool.org> > (accessed 2 April 2006).

² Kenneth Noble, "Issue of Racism Erupts in Simpson Trial," *New York Times*, (14 January 1995): A 18. Available from: Proquest, New York Times Historical Collection, Menlo School Lib. < <http://library.menloschool.org> > (accessed 2 April 2006).