

# Law and O.J.

**S**EAN SHIMAMOTO STOOD AMONG hundreds of law students at New York U. School of Law, his eyes fixed on the monitor.

"We, the jury, find the defendant, Orenthal James Simpson, not guilty...."

While some students around the nation cheered, others recoiled in shock. Shimamoto, a third-year law student, was not surprised. He was embarrassed.

"It's not a question of right or wrong, but how much justice you can afford," Shimamoto says. "For those of us involved in the legal system, it's like, 'God, I'm a part of this.'"

## CLASS

Shimamoto is one of thousands of law students across the country who watched the "trial of the century" with more than a cursory interest. While O.J. was being tried by a jury of his peers, the general public was passing judgment on lawyers.

Fred Moss, a law professor at Southern Methodist U., Texas, says many law students feel they bear the burden of proof in defending their profession.

"They're feeling a little victimized to some extent," Moss says. "The trial has increased the public's negative feelings about lawyers, and law students are the unfortunate victims. [The O.J. trial] was not our fault, but we're going to bear the brunt of the fallout."

Despite the blame heaped on the shoulders of America's legal practitioners, few law students seem interested in abandoning ship and backtracking toward another career.

Martin Fisher, a third-year law student at the U. of Oregon, says the trial was such an extreme example of legal theater that it won't have a

long-term effect on how his peers or the public views lawyers.

"In a year or so, no one is going to remember the trial," Fisher says. "It shouldn't turn people off from wanting to be lawyers. If it does, well, there are too many lawyers anyway."

Law-school enrollment has been declining in recent years across the nation following an upsurge during the '80s that many law professors attribute to the popularity of *L.A. Law*. It's not clear, however, whether real Los Angeles lawyering will have any effect on the number of potential legal eagles vying for seats in criminal law.

"It may discourage some potential students and encourage others," says Georgetown U. law school professor Paul Rothstein. "The trial may have given them a more realistic picture of the process."

Some students are more concerned about what the legal future holds if people consider law school because of the O.J. trial.

"If it causes people to become lawyers," Fisher says, "God help us!"

Sean Smith, U. of Oregon/Illustration by Stephen Tenebrini, U. of Minnesota



The eyes of justice.



### Guest Expert: Dick Vitale

On the O.J. trial: "The length of that trial, man, they needed Judge Dickie V. up there. I would've moved that sucker along a lot quicker."



Nothing like poker and cigar night with the... uh... guys.

# Seeegars: Plugging Away

**T**HOSE BLUE EYES. THOSE PLUMP LIPS. That fat cigar. Fat cigar? Yes, that is a stogie in supermodel Linda Evangelista's dainty hand on the cover of — wait, that's not *Cosmo* or *Vogue*. It's *Cigar Aficionado*. What is going on here?

How about some serious cigar smoking among celeb types and students alike? The stogie business has practically tripled in the past two years, according to Paul Macdonald, owner of Boston's historic David P. Ehrlich Co. cigar store. "It's huge," he says. "We can hardly contain it."

## PULSE

This growing number of cigar smokers includes not only the aforementioned Evangelista but also a number of planet Hollywood residents: Jason Priestley, Tia Carrere, Demi Moore and John Travolta, plus Madonna and Arnold Schwarzenegger, to name a few.

Back in Beantown, cigar-store proprietor Macdonald says that although his typical customers are in their late 20s to early 40s and upscale, he has seen a definite increase in his college-going customers — particularly grad students. "If he's a poor college student, he still wants to be upscale," he says.

There is, of course, a difference between stinky dime-store cigars that conjure images of smoky college poker games and, say, the fancy imported cigars President Clinton smokes.

John Cox, co-owner of A. Curtis Draper

Tobacconist in Washington, D.C., says the market for domestic, machine-made (read: cheap) cigars has been sliding for years. But premium handmade cigars, which cost upwards of \$3 each, are in high demand all around.

After 27 years in the cigar business, Cox says this so-called resurgence of cigar smoking is part reality, part media myth. He doesn't deny a sales boom in the past three years, but if the media weren't there to make cigar culture so cool, he says, students wouldn't know where to begin.

Jeanne Geier, a senior at the U. of South Alabama, thinks smoking in general is disgusting. However, she says she'd pick a cigar smoker over a cigarette smoker any day. "Cigars are more distinguished," she says. "Usually people have a reason for smoking cigars — some kind of occasion."

Just the woody taste and spicy smell of cigars — plus her cigar-smoking boyfriend Kyle MacLachlan — are reason enough for cover girl Evangelista to light up, she says in *Cigar Aficionado*.

Ben Michelson, a U. of Connecticut senior, smokes cigars for several reasons. His father and grandfather both smoke cigars. Plus, he landed the good stuff — Cuban cigars — when he visited Jamaica. But the clincher has been working on Wall Street for the past three summers, he says.

"A lot of bankers smoke cigars."

Story and photo by John Youngs, U. of Connecticut