

# RACE

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lawyers and prosecutors, were taken aback by the jury's decision not to talk to the attorneys in the case. Such chats are often invaluable for lawyers to find out what they have done right or wrong in a case.

The jury also refused to explain their verdicts to the media, leaving analysts floundering in their search for reasons for the swift and, to some, shocking verdicts.

Ermenwein, a KTLA-TV legal analyst, said the jury had also sent a message to the prosecution: "We are rejecting you without even giving you the consideration of the evidence in this particular case"

"I don't think the jury even took the time...to consider whether the case was proven beyond a reasonable doubt, or

whether or not the evidence was tainted or planted or fabricated," he added.

Ben Brafman, a New York criminal defence lawyer, said, "The verdict was appropriate and there was a reasonable doubt. The speed was more than just a verdict. It was a statement by this jury that they are simply not going to tolerate police misconduct and police officers lying."

Ira London, another New York criminal defence lawyer, said, "The prosecution witnesses in the Simpson case did not maintain their credibility. They all appeared to be damaged goods," he added.

Not all analysts went along with the race line. Noted Los Angeles defence lawyer Ira Salzman said, "All we can presume is that the jury listened

to the evidence and called it the way they saw it."

Lead Simpson attorney Johnnie Cochran, who had urged the jury to deliver a verdict repudiating police racism, said after their decision that the idea the judgment was based only on the race issue was "preposterous."

But District Attorney Gil Garcetti, at news conference following the verdicts, suggested the jury had thrown reason out of the window in coming to their

verdicts. "It was clear, at least to me and other members of the prosecution team, that this was an emotional trial. Apparently their decision was based on emotion and that overcame the reason."

Co-lead prosecutor Chris Darden also questioned the verdicts, telling reporters, "We came here in search of justice. You'll have to be the judge, I suspect, as to whether or not any of us found it today."

# O.J.

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and Goldman, 25, who were stabbed and slashed to death on June 12, 1994, outside her posh townhouse. He could have been sentenced to life in prison if convicted.

One of the jurors said the jury made the right decision. "I think we did the right thing," said Brenda Moran, who until now had been known only as juror number seven. "You know, matter of fact, I know we did."

## King, Furhman Double Nightmare For L.A. Police

LOS ANGELES - First, the Rodney King beating sent the Los Angeles police department reeling. Now the decision to set O.J. Simpson free Tuesday has left the department stunned, bruised and battered.

At police headquarters in Parker Center, some officers reacted with disbelief as the verdict was read. "Unbelievable," said one officer.

"I have nothing to say," said another.

A detective who watched the verdict on television walked out of the press room later, saying: "They let a murderer go."

Despite what prosecutors called a "mountain of evidence" against Simpson, a jury of 10 women and two men acquitted the former football great of murder.

Police Chief Willie Williams, whose department has come under fire for tolerating racist attitudes of some officers, said

the acquittal of Simpson should not be interpreted as a vote of no confidence in the Los Angeles police.

"This is absolutely not an indictment of my department," Williams told reporters. "I think if the public has a lack of faith, they may have a lack of faith in the entire system."

During the trial, defense attorney Johnnie Cochran poked holes in the prosecution's case by claiming police investigators conspired to frame Simpson for the murders and bungling lab technicians contaminated evidence.

His attacks, including the revelation that Mark Furhman, a lead detective in the case, lied on the witness stand about his racial beliefs, weakened the state's case and hurt a police

department already trying to overcome racial division.

Black officers are suing the predominantly white police union, charging it is a "bastion of white supremacy," and the black police chief brought in after the 1991 King beating fails to command the confidence of a majority of officers, while alleging he is being undermined for political reasons.

"The LAPD has suffered a big-time hit, but it can be saved if the leadership and the public recognize that the future of the city hangs in the balance," said black community leader John Mack, president of the local branch of the Urban League.

"We want a strong police force protecting people, but not brutalizing and harassing people," he told Reuters.

## Jesse Jackson, Citing Threats, Seeks Healing

WASHINGTON - Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, saying he and his predominantly black organisation had received death threats since the O.J. Simpson murder acquittal, called Wednesday for a national healing of divided race relations.

"There's so much hate and hurt and hostility in the streets," Jackson told a news conference. "We've been receiving threatening telephone calls all of the day—basically whites calling in."

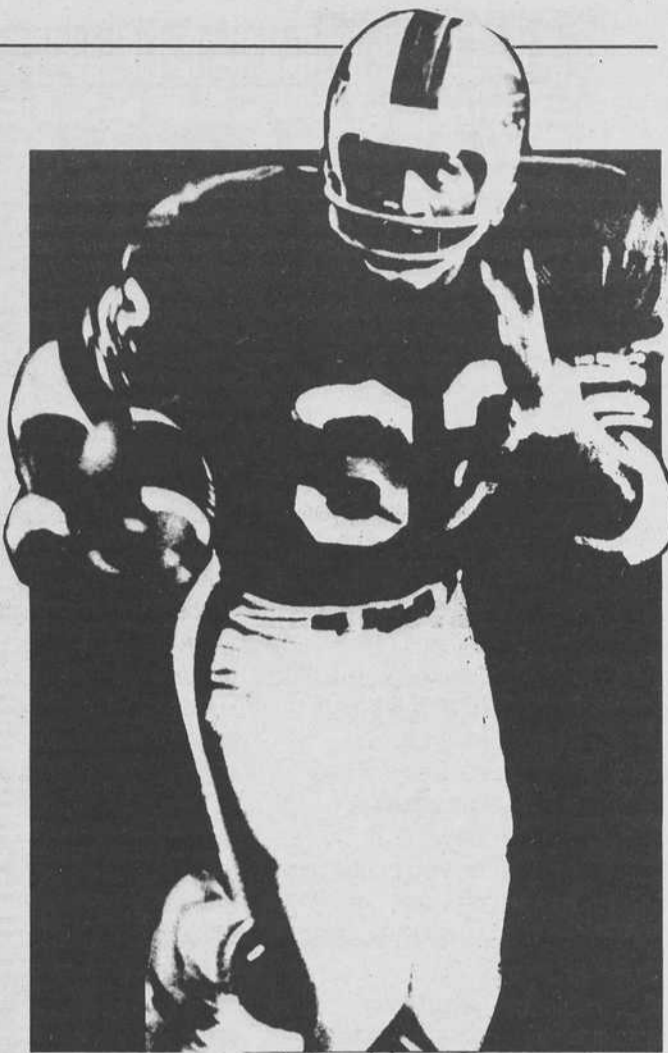
His Chicago office of the Rainbow Coalition organisation had received bomb threats, he said, and Chicago police "had to secure the building."

He said the pain felt by people opposed to the verdict must not turn to retaliation.

Jackson called on political and other leaders to set a high moral tone in the aftermath of the verdict. Before the verdict, polls had said a majority of whites thought Simpson guilty while most blacks felt he should be acquitted of murdering his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

"We must take these threats seriously. This is no time for Americans to retreat from law to

anarchy and terrorism," Jackson said. "So at every level our leadership from the White House, to Congress to governors mansions ... we must stand for and fight for a moral tone."



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