

COMMENTARY

# Believe it or not, a third O.J. Simpson trial could occur

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Believe it or not, the O.J. Simpson legal saga is far from over.

There is the real possibility of yet another Simpson criminal trial. This time the issue is whether Simpson committed perjury when he swore under oath during his 1997 civil trial that he did not physically abuse Nicole Brown Simpson.

For the past year Simpson's legal opponents have pressed to get Los Angeles District Attorney Gil Garcetti to prosecute Simpson on perjury charges. Garcetti has dragged his feet. Now they're asking the Los Angeles County Grand Jury and California's attorney general to investigate a possible perjury charge.

The grand jury is listening and has indicated that it would consider the possibility of indicting

Simpson for perjury.

Perjury, however, is hard to prove and even harder to prosecute.

A prosecutor would have to show that Simpson intentionally lied when he said he did not assault his wife and that the lie was crucial to the outcome of the civil trial.

There is real evidence that in at least one case Nicole Simpson suffered physical injuries after being punched by Simpson. The court ordered him to perform community service and pay \$970 in fines, penalties and contributions to a battered women's shelter.

Simpson in his civil trial made it appear that he didn't batter Nicole, but that he tried only to restrain her during an altercation. Whether he lied or not about spousal abuse, it did not change the outcome of the civil trial. He was still found liable and ordered to pay \$33.5 million in

damages to the Goldman and Brown families.

But the bigger question is why even think of prosecuting Simpson again?

The answer is that his courtroom triumphs and defeats did not change the fact that millions of Americans are still convinced that Simpson is a murderer.

They believe he's free only because he had deep pockets; used his wealth and celebrity status to hire a "dream team" defense to get a predominantly Black jury; was able to manipulate the criminal justice system; mangle the physical evidence and twist the testimony against him; minimize the issue of domestic violence and most importantly play the race card.

To those still outraged, and their numbers are still huge, Simpson may have been acquitted in a court of law, but stands convicted in the

court of public opinion.

The liability verdict against him in the civil trial is regarded by many as at best a pyrrhic victory, and at worst a joke since Simpson still walks free and has paid virtually nothing in damages to the Goldman and Brown families.

A third trial possibility is yet another reminder that the towering social and legal issues that bitterly divided millions of Americans in his criminal and civil trials are still very much unresolved.

It's, of course, a foolish delusion to think that a third trial would resolve them. But as long as he remains America's number one public pariah he will continue to be the perennial lightning rod for those issues.

Sadly this is still the biggest liability to us all.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of "The Crisis in Black and Black."

## Tragedy and Hope in Africa

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Once again, the world is confronted by the scourge of evil, by the awful willingness of some

### To Be Equal

By Hugh B. Price  
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equally important; to bear witness to - the search for survivors.

They come because they know that the hope of finding survivors is in itself a

human beings to inflict pain and suffering upon the innocent in order to, by their perverse reasoning, make a political statement.

Once again, we endure the agony of the aftermath.

We see, with a shock, the physical damage that has been done to human bodies. Because the shock waves of the horrendous crime reach every place human decency exists, we feel the psychological trauma of those who were at ground zero and survived, as if the broken window glass and shards of metal, wood and concrete were lacerating our own souls.

The bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania are tragedies in which the human costs - of lives cut short, of promise not to be fulfilled, of suffering loosed around the globe yet again - forever diminish into insignificance the twisted souls responsible for it. They have forfeited their connection with humanity. They are as worthless as dust.

We in America know now to our sorrow that individuals of such profound malevolence lurk not just in Asia, Africa, Europe, or Latin America. They are not just of "those other people." The crumpled wreckage in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam should remind us - in case we've forgotten - that a similar horrific act happened in the American heartland, destroying the lives of American men, women and children, as these have destroyed the lives of Africans and Americans.

But we must not fail to recognize that, in its awful way, the aftermath of the tragedies an ocean away actually reaffirm something enormously positive: they reaffirm the essential decency of humankind, and its determination to persist despite crushing setbacks.

So, as in Oklahoma City, we see not only the organized governmental response. We also see ordinary citizens rushing to the sites of the tragedies to, if necessary, help in - and,

repudiation of the barbarism of the killers. They understand that in bearing witness against atrocity, we declare ourselves for decency in the conduct of human affairs. In Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam as in Oklahoma City, that universal reaction represents the hope of the world.

In that way, the tragedies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam also offer the American people a more positive way of looking at Black Africa, a region of the world whose reality, still, is so often skewed by some observers' untrustworthy attitudes.

African-Americans' feelings about and relationship to Black Africa has long been subjected to the same kind of racist distortion as our perception of our relationship to America itself. The reality is that Black America's true feelings have always been more complex, more nuanced than the racist fantasies have suggested.

Mora McClean, president of the Africa America Institute, sketched one facet of that relationship when she wrote in a recent issue of the Urban League's magazine, *Opportunity Journal*, that an attachment to one's ancestral homeland does not automatically diminish the attachment to one's own native land. In fact, the experience of American ethnic groups as a whole indicates that it often leads to a greater civic involvement.

The joyous embrace of that complexity can be seen in the lives of Julian Bartley, the American Consul General in Nairobi, and his son, Jay, both of whom perished in the embassy bombing. Mr. Bartley, 55, was a 24-year veteran of the Foreign Service, having previously served in the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Spain, Israel and Korea. His son, 20, a sophomore at United States International University, in Nairobi, was working at the embassy for the summer.

According to the *New York Times* August 9 account of the memorial service in Nairobi (See Tragedy, Page 14)

## Carl Rowan's Commentary

### Viagra's impacts source of joy, pain, medical study

Special to Sentinel-Voice

I've just read another headline about the federal Drug Administration confirming that 39 men have died from making love with the aid of Viagra, and that government officials are checking to see if 38 more deaths can be tied to the sensational new sex potion.

The drug's manufacturer, Pfizer Inc., says that since Viagra was put on the market last spring, more than 3 million prescriptions have been filled for 2 million men — most over 60 — more than 39 probably die out of boredom every week.

So, statistically, the death figures don't remotely support an implication that Viagra is a dangerous drug that was approved too soon by the FDA.

Given the number of men who have turned to Viagra, despite having heart ailments and other illnesses that make the pill risky for them, it is almost incredible that many hundreds have not died in the throes of rediscovered sexual excitement.

But there is a larger story that begs telling. While deaths make automatic headlines, the "side effects" of Viagra that we ought to care about are these:

— How many marriages are being saved because the pill erases or ameliorates the destructive force of sexual dysfunction?

— How many marriages and once-stable relationships are being broken up because Viagra makes infidelity possible?

Sexual factors, more than money problems and disputes over children, have long been



CARL ROWAN

cited as the major reason why half the marriages in America fail.

Nothing — not the loss of a job or anything else — is more humiliating for a male in this sex-focused society than being unable to "do one's manly duties" for a wife or other partner.

The number of men needing help has been grossly underestimated.

That's why 303,424 prescriptions for Viagra were written during the first week the drug was on the market.

Demand slipped to 184,312 prescriptions during the week ending July 10, but the craving remains high enough to ensure that the drug will hit the billion-dollar mark in sales in its first year.

Ironically, a pill that saves some marriages can destroy others.

Some reports tell of previously impotent men in their 60's deciding that they "can be a studs again" rush out with their pills looking for younger women. There's also evidence a lot of younger men whose semi-impotence was the basis of their faithfulness are now viewing Viagra as liberating them to play around.

I don't have the resources to do solid research on the "side effects" of one of the most sensational drugs of the century. And I don't like relying on anecdotal data.

So I'm hoping that a modern Kinsey or Masters and Johnson is already collecting reliable data on what Viagra is doing and will do to us as a society.

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