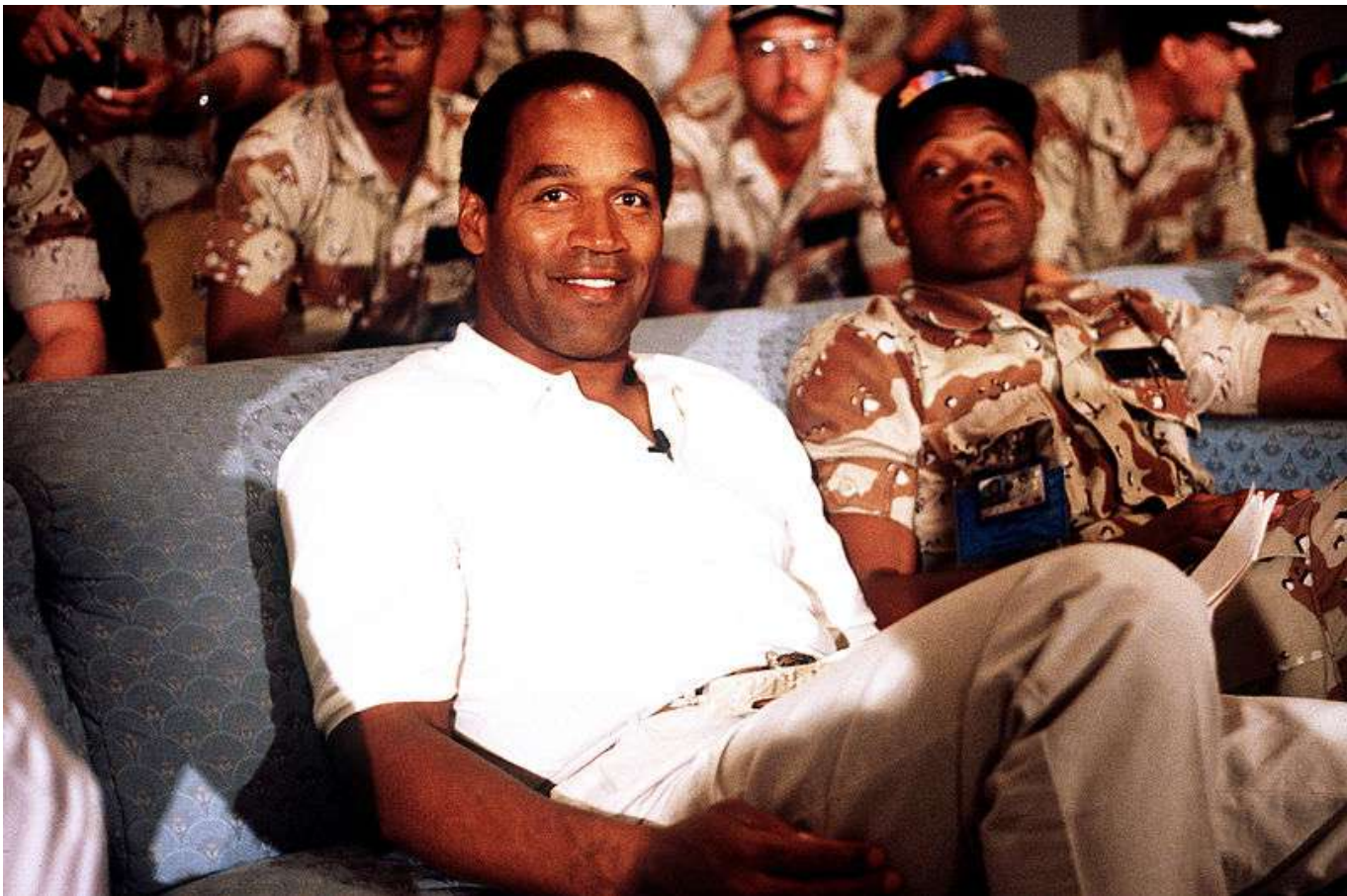


The OJ Simpson Verdict 20 Years On



CRIME FEATURED NEWS

By Alexander Baron



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It’s difficult to believe that twenty years have passed since Orenthal James Simpson was acquitted of a double murder in one of the most ludicrous miscarriages of justice seen anywhere, but it was indeed that long ago, to the day.

If you are under thirty you will probably not remember the trial or the case either first hand or in any depth, although if you speak English even as a second language you are probably at least partly familiar with it. Simpson was the most famous American ever to stand trial for a double murder, and the evidence against him was absolutely overwhelming, the forensics were particularly damning.

All manner of reasons have been suggested as to why after hearing months of such damning testimony from the prosecution and ridiculous innuendo from the defense, the jury acquitted him after only four hours of deliberation. Whether it was indeed payback for the obscene **Rodney King acquittal** or the jury really was that stupid remains to be seen. It was said at the time that America

was polarised along racial lines, with blacks genuinely believing him to be innocent and whites believing him to be guilty. Whether or not that was indeed the case, few people anywhere now believe him to be any kind of innocent, while most black Americans see Simpson for what he is.



Vincent Buglioisi made a lengthy documentary about the trial, and there is even a **dedicated website** set up by an American university which should be the first point of call for all serious students. There have been some real dumb verdicts since including the acquittal on all major charges of Casey Anthony, and in the UK the convictions of Michael Stone (twice) for **the Chillenden Murders**, and of celebrities for **imaginary crimes**, but the Simpson acquittal remains up there with the worst of them.

Simpson has been back behind bars for the past seven years after plotting a crime that would ordinarily have attracted heavy punishment for all concerned. It remains to be seen how someone who had been so lucky could also be so stupid, but the authorities didn't mess up this time. They let off his co-conspirators each with a slap on the wrist while throwing the book at him. As things stand he will remain behind bars for another two years unless they can figure out some way of throwing away the key to his cell.

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