THE SIMPSON CASE: THE OVERVIEW

THE SIMPSON CASE: THE OVERVIEW; Simpson Ordered to Stand Trial In Slaying of Ex-Wife and Friend

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**LOS ANGELES, June 8—**O. J. Simpson was ordered today by a Municipal Court judge to stand trial for murder, just hours after an expert testified that Mr. Simpson's blood matches a drop of blood found where his former wife and a friend were slashed to death.

The judge, Kathleen Kennedy-Powell, said the prosecution had satisfied her that Mr. Simpson should answer charges in Superior Court that he murdered Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald L. Goldman on the night of June 12. The ruling concluded a six-day hearing to determine whether the evidence was strong enough to send Mr. Simpson to trial.

"Keeping in mind that the proof in this matter is not proof beyond a reasonable doubt," Judge Kennedy-Powell said, "the court feels that there is ample evidence to establish strong suspicion of the guilt of the accused."

To win a conviction at trial in Superior Court, the prosecution will be required to go well beyond "strong suspicion of guilt" and convince 12 jurors that Mr. Simpson is guilty "beyond reasonable doubt."

Mr. Simpson, who could face a death sentence if convicted on the two charges of first-degree murder, bore a deep frown as Judge Kennedy-Powell issued her ruling. But he said nothing, continuing his public silence throughout a preliminary hearing that has transfixed millions of television viewers.

Mr. Simpson's lawyer, Robert L. Shapiro, urged the judge to throw out the case, one of the most celebrated in decades.

He argued that at a minimum the case should not proceed until the police had finished their investigations, which detectives say are continuing. As for the evidence presented over the last six days -- evidence of slashed bodies, meandering blood trails and bloody gloves, evidence about alibis, whereabouts and things recalled and not recalled -- Mr. Shapiro argued that it was only circumstantial.

"And that just doesn't stand up," he concluded.

The lead prosecutor, Marcia Clark, countered that the evidence against Mr. Simpson was "powerful," even if mostly circumstantial.

She noted that a trail of blood had been found leading from the murder scene, a trail that picked up again on the driveway of Mr. Simpson's house, and she pointed out that when arrested Mr. Simpson was found to have a cut on his left hand that could have left the blood.

At the house, she added, investigators also found blood on Mr. Simpson's truck and came across a bloody glove that matched another glove found earlier at the death scene.

Finally, though no actual evidence was presented in support, Ms. Clark contended that the killings were premeditated.

"The people have more than established their burden," she said. "The defendant should be held to account."

Having agreed with Ms. Clark, Judge Kennedy-Powell ordered Mr. Simpson held without bail, which is required in California when a defendant faces two murder charges. She set July 22 for his arraignment.

Under California court rules, a trial must be held within 60 days after arraignment. District Attorney Gil Garcetti of Los Angeles said the prosecution would be ready to start in mid-September. Mr. Garcetti said the prosecution had not decided whether to ask for the death penalty.

Before final adjournment of the preliminary hearing, Judge Kennedy-Powell said that a sealed envelope of evidence, turned over to the court by another judge, who said he had been given it by a defense lawyer, would be forwarded to the trial court unopened.

In trying today to tie Mr. Simpson to the murder scene with blood tests, the prosecution called in a Los Angeles Police Department blood expert, Gregory Matheson.

Mr. Matheson testified that his tests had indicated that only about 1 of every 200 people -- or .43 percent -- have the blood characteristics found in the trail of blood spots discovered leading away from the crime scene.

Mr. Simpson has blood that closely approximates the mix found in that small category, Mr. Matheson added.

Could Ms. Simpson fit into the blood category? Ms. Clark asked.

"No," Mr. Matheson answered.

How about Mr. Goldman?

"No," Mr. Matheson again replied.

And what of O. J. Simpson?

"Yes," Mr. Matheson answered. "He could be indeed." Making Most of Testimony

By any stretch, that exchange was the dramatic -- and the legal -- high point in the six-day preliminary hearing. And Ms. Clark was careful to make the most of it.

"So," she concluded, wrapping up her questioning, "99.57 percent of the population is excluded as a possible source of the blood trail?"

"That is correct," Mr. Matheson replied.

Before producing the blood tests today, the closest the prosecution had come to placing Mr. Simpson at the scene was the pairing of the bloody leather gloves, one found near the victims and the other picked up outside Mr. Simpson's guest quarters.

As today's testimony unfolded, Mr. Simpson constantly wiggled his feet beneath the defense table, took several deep breaths and alternately stared at Mr. Matheson and the oak-paneled walls of the courtroom. Mr. Simpson, a football great who became a television personality and an actor after his athletic career, will be 47 years old on Saturday.

On cross-examination by defense lawyers, Mr. Matheson conceded that the base line of 1 in 200 people for his blood comparisons was not the general population. Rather, he said, the base line was drawn by looking only at the results of blood tests run by the Los Angeles Police Department.

The defense lawyers then suggested that the police department base line might be skewed because blood characteristics vary slightly depending on race and ethnic background, and an unusually high percentage of police tests in Los Angeles are run on black and Hispanic subjects.

Mr. Matheson acknowledged the heavy presence of black and Hispanic subjects in the police test population.

Under cross-examination, Mr. Matheson also acknowledged that perhaps 40,000 people or more in Los Angeles County had the same markers as those found in the blood taken from the crime scene.

Nevertheless, Mr. Matheson defended the validity of his conclusions.

One defense lawyer, Gerald Uelmen, then suggested that perhaps the blood left on the trail leading from the crime scene was a mixture of blood, perhaps some from the murderer and some from one or both of the victims.

"Could blood of the assailant and a victim have mixed?" Mr. Uelmen asked.

"I wouldn't know," Mr. Matheson replied. Coroner Describes Wounds

Mr. Matheson's testimony, which he supported with a chart filled with arcane figures and acronyms, was easily the most dramatic thus far in the Simpson case, but the testimony from the next and final witness today was easily the most grisly.

It came from Irwin Golden, the deputy medical examiner for the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office. He performed the autopsies on Mrs. Simpson and Mr. Goldman two days after their deaths.

Supported by line drawings depicting the many places where the victims had been stabbed and slashed, he told of a wound on Mrs. Simpson's neck that stretched almost from ear to ear and was so deep that it exposed her spinal column.

Mr. Goldman, he said, had been stabbed and slashed repeatedly over much of his body, with fatal wounds in his neck, chest and stomach.

Both victims, Dr. Golden said, bore cuts and slashes on their hands and arms that indicated they had tried to fend off their assailant.

Asked to describe Ms. Simpson's neck wound, Dr. Golden replied, with Ms. Simpson's father, Lou Brown, present in the courtroom that "basically, it was a gaping wound, approximately five and a half inches in length by two and a half inches in width."

How could it be described, asked William Hodgman, a prosecutor.

"This was a fatal wound," Dr. Golden replied.

Asked to describe the seriousness of Mr. Goldman's major wounds, Dr. Golden spoke of a stab to the stomach.

"This wound," he said, "penetrated five and a half inches."

Mr. Goldman's parents were not in the courtroom during this part of the proceedings.