

## **LAW REVIEW**

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### **O.J. – WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS STAYS IN VEGAS – IN PRISON**

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O.J. Simpson pulled off the “Caper of the Decade” when he was acquitted of charges that he killed his ex-wife Nicole Brown-Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman in 1994.

Sorry O.J. but I would not count on it this time - with a Sin City jury.

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas, and indeed, O.J. may stay in Vegas after the jury returns its verdict.

In an apparent robbery reminiscent of the bungling Nixon-era Watergate burglars, O.J. and co-defendant Clarence “C.J.” Stewart are charged with 12 criminal counts, including kidnapping, armed robbery, coercion and assault with a deadly weapon. The kidnapping charge, which stems from Simpson and his cohorts demanding that the alleged victims not leave the cramped room at the Palace Station hotel-casino, could result in a sentence of life with the possibility of parole. At least there is a possibility. Armed robbery would also mean mandatory prison time.

The so-called victims are memorabilia peddler and convicted felon Alfred Beardsley and Bruce Fromong. Beardsley called the police after the confrontation, but now tells the jury he does not want to testify against his good

friend O.J.. Of course he'd rather sell his football jerseys. Who buys O.J. items anyway, bargain hunters? Comedians?

One of the issues that will be raised on appeal, assuming O.J. and C.J. are convicted, an assumption I am willing to make, is that two black women were excluded from the jury panel, leaving an all-white jury, although two of six alternate jurors are black. The prosecutor claims one woman was removed because she had strong religious views and would not be inclined to "forgive" O.J., while the other black dismissed juror said she was hesitant to send anyone to prison. Given those facts it would be difficult to prove "systematic exclusion" of black jurors.

Interestingly, some of the jurors acknowledged disagreeing with O.J.'s acquittal of the murders of Nicole Brown-Simpson and Goldman. Yes I said murders. Jurors said they could put that aside and weigh the Las Vegas case on its own merits. Right. And whatever came of Kato anyway?

Key evidence for the prosecution came out late last week when two of the intruders acknowledged bringing guns - claiming it was O.J.'s idea to bring "some heat." That will be hard to rebut, especially if O.J. does not take the stand, which is standard procedure in criminal cases.

Although it might not be a bad idea for O.J. to testify and explain his side of the case: "Jurors, I was merely robbing back what was rightfully mine – memorabilia I had hidden from the Goldman family to avoid their judgment."

Without O.J. telling his version of events, I would have to say it does not look good for the former football star and Heisman winner. Even with his

testimony, I don't see him returning to his favorite golf courses in Florida for awhile.

Now if I were representing O.J., here's what his defense would be: O.J. was in that room because he was looking for his ex-wife's killer. Some jokes never grow old.

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