

# Possible jurors questioned

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Lawyers in O.J. Simpson's trial questioned prospective jurors in court Wednesday for the first time and the judge warned he will be "very suspicious of a Rip van Winkle" claiming to know nothing about the case.

Superior Court Judge Lance Ito said possible jurors' exposure to the case doesn't bother him. The goal, he said, is to find jurors who can set aside their opinions and judge Simpson on evidence presented in court.

None of the 84 prospective jurors called into court said they have missed the intense publicity since Simpson's ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, were found stabbed to death June 12.

Many of the potential jurors said in written questionnaires they were glued to televisions watching a white Ford Bronco carrying Simpson meander along Southern California freeways followed by police cars on June 17.

Jury prospects were questioned about their beliefs, backgrounds and knowledge of the case. Some of the 79-page questionnaires they filled out last month were released, providing an in-depth look into their lives.

"I am not looking for hermits," Ito told the group. "We would be very suspicious of a Rip van Winkle that awoke yesterday and just learned of this case."

Prosecutors and defense attorneys agreed to dismiss one man after it was disclosed on his questionnaire that he is an accountant for the Sheriff's Department and is in charge of tallying the department's costs for the Simpson case. He was the third juror dismissed Wednesday.

One man wrote in his questionnaire that he believed Simpson was "probably guilty" but would put that aside and consider the evidence fairly.

A woman quizzed by Ito and attorneys said she tried to avoid discussing the case since she was

called for jury duty but, "When you turn on the TV, you can't avoid seeing something."

The cashier in a county tax office said she believed she could be fair. Asked by Ito if she could put out of her mind portions of a frantic 911 call made by Simpson's ex-wife, the woman replied, "I guess so."

Later, under extensive questioning from a defense attorney, the woman insisted she could judge the case on the facts.

She said she hadn't heard of Simpson before the June 12 killings outside Ms. Simpson's condominium.

"At first," she said, "I didn't know who he was until someone told me he was that sport player that was on TV sometimes broadcasting a football game."

The prospective jurors questioned individually in court were the first of about 300 people who passed initial jury selection last month. They will be questioned until 12 jurors and eight alternates are found.

By law, the judge is the only person who may question jurors, but Ito said because of the "unusual nature" of the case and intense media coverage that he would allow lawyers to query panelists.

Ito took a hard line Tuesday against the prosecution, threatening to dismiss key evidence because prosecutors waited too long to send some items to labs for DNA tests. Among evidence prosecutors risk losing are the genetic test results from the bloody glove found behind Simpson's guest house the morning after the murders.

Also in limbo are numerous other blood samples lifted from Simpson's Bronco, blood on Simpson's driveway and walkway and fibers from the carpeting in the Bronco. The samples were sent for testing in early September, about three months after the slayings. Ito said he will rule on Friday.

## Eye surgery results please patients

CHICAGO (AP) — Many people who undergo surgery called radial keratotomy to correct nearsightedness will be pleased with the results, but some may need reading glasses as they age, a study found.

Researchers discovered that 70 percent of people who underwent radial keratotomy in the early 1980s did not need glasses or contact lenses for nearsightedness 10 years afterward.

Nearsighted people can see close-up objects clearly but not ones far away. Farsighted people can see objects at a distance but have trouble focusing on close-up objects.

Radial keratotomy corrects nearsightedness by flattening the cornea, the clear tissue covering

the eye's iris and pupil. The cornea flattens on its own as people age, however, which is what causes farsightedness in people over 40.

The survey found some evidence that radial keratotomy may make farsightedness occur more quickly in some people.

"Based on these findings, it may be that some people will be pleased with their vision shortly after having RK, but their opinions may change 5, 10 or 15 years down the road," said the study's co-chairman, Dr. Peter J. McDonnell of the Doheny Eye Institute at the University of Southern California.

Forty-three percent of the people who had their corneas flattened by surgery saw the

corneas continue to flatten to varying degrees in the years after the surgery. Some of them could eventually need reading glasses sooner, researchers said.

About 250,000 Americans undergo radial keratotomy annually. The study, sponsored by the National Eye Institute, was the longest-running follow-up of people who have had the procedure.

Complications were few among the 347 patients operated on at nine eye centers nationwide in the early 1980s, and no one lost eyesight entirely, according to the study. But three percent of operated-on eyes had poorer distance vision after the surgery than before, researchers reported in the October issue of the Archives of Ophthalmology.

## City council unanimously bans cursing

RARITAN, N.J. (AP) — A car with Florida plates pulled slowly onto Raritan's main thoroughfare Wednesday. An elderly couple looked around curiously.

"Is this the town that just banned cursing?" Harry Stiles, 75, asked a passerby. When the Tampa resident was told yes, Stiles replied, "Oh good. Because we want to move here."

Stiles isn't the only person who likes the cursing ban the borough council passed unanimously Tuesday night. A Montville man is offering \$10,000 to any state or federal legislator who can make cursing in public a crime.

"I'm not saying I want a cop on every street corner with a bar of soap in his pocket to wash your mouth out with soap," Brad Honigsberg said of his offer. "But I do think cursing in public should be banned. People can't seem to do it voluntarily, so it's up to lawmakers."

Other residents and visitors interviewed Wednesday in this two-square-mile borough oppose the ban, saying it infringes on free speech.

Bree Dougherty, 21, said she couldn't believe the council passed it.

"What are they thinking?" said Dougherty, who recently moved here from Philadelphia. "The days of *Leave It to Beaver* and *American Bandstand* are long gone. The council should be more worried about how to protect citizens from crime and how to keep property taxes low."

The cursing ban makes it illegal for people to behave in a disorderly manner by using "noisy, rude

or indecent behavior, by using profane, vulgar or indecent language, by making insulting remarks or comments to others" in public.

Violators will be issued a summons, and could get as much as a \$500 fine and 90 days in jail.

The American Civil Liberties Union's New Jersey chapter has deemed the ban unconstitutional. Ed Martone, the chapter's executive director, said the organization would not take action unless police enforce the ban. Raritan Police Chief Joseph Sfera has said that doing so would only invite a lawsuit.

Martone has said the ACLU will probably step in and help if someone wants to challenge the ban. That didn't scare Mayor Anthony DeCicco from going ahead with Tuesday night's vote, and it isn't scaring the ban's supporters.

Honigsberg made the same \$10,000 offer in 1988 — after being angered in a Point Pleasant restaurant when a group of men were cursing loudly, bothering not only him, but an elderly couple nearby.

"When the elderly man asked them to stop cursing, one of the men said, 'Sit down, you bleeping old man,'" Honigsberg recalled. "So then I stood up and told them to stop."

The men took one look at Honigsberg, a 45-year-old with the build of a football player, and decided to knock it off, Honigsberg laughed.

"Foul language is like a symptom," he said. "It's a defiance of accepted social mores and decorum and authority."

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