

Jury Selection Begins in Simpson Case

Accused of kidnapping, robbery

(AP) -- O.J. Simpson went on trial for kidnapping and robbery Monday in Las Vegas with a judge determined to find a jury unaffected by his long-ago "Trial of the Century."

"What happened then, happened then," Judge Jackie Glass told prospective jurors.

"If you are here and think you are going to punish Mr. Simpson for what happened in 1995, this is not the case for you," she said, urging them to confess if they

had such a motive. All stayed silent.

While asking many questions about the past, the judge stopped short of asking the big question that Simpson's lawyer wanted: Do they consider Simpson a murderer?

"My determination is no, we are not going there," Glass told lawyers outside the prospects' presence. "We are not here to relitigate that case. The jury reached a verdict in that case and people



have strong feelings about it. This case is about what happened here in Las Vegas last year."

The new case debuted as a pale postscript to the murder trial that riveted America in the 1990s when Simpson, a former pro-football star, was charged with murdering his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald

O.J. Simpson appears in a Las Vegas court Monday for his trial on charges of burglary, robbery and assault. (AP photo)

Goldman, and ultimately acquitted.

Missing were the crowds that surrounded the courthouse when Simpson was arrested last year for allegedly robbing two sports collectibles dealers in a hotel room, and the media throng that has followed him over the years was dramatically diminished.

Simpson has a co-defendant this time, Clarence "C.J." Stewart, an old friend who went along on an ill-fated mission which Simpson claims was intended to reclaim personal property.

Simpson and Stewart have each pleaded not guilty to 12 charges, including felony kidnapping, armed robbery, conspiracy, burglary, coercion and assault with a deadly weapon.

Simpson maintains he didn't ask anyone to bring guns to the hotel room and that he didn't know anyone in the room was armed.

The stakes are high — a robbery conviction would mean mandatory prison time, and a kidnapping conviction carries the possibility of life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Unemployed Jumps to 5-year High in 2008

(AP) - The nation's unemployment rate zoomed to a five-year high of 6.1 percent in August as employers slashed 84,000 jobs, dramatic proof of the mounting damage a deeply troubled economy is inflicting on workers and busi-

nesses alike.

The Labor Department's report showed the increasing toll the housing, credit and financial crises are taking on the economy.

With the employment situation deteriorating, there's

growing worry that consumers will recoil, throwing the economy into a tailspin later this year or early next year.

The jobless rate jumped to 6.1 percent in August, from 5.7 percent in July. And, employers cut payrolls for the eighth month

in a row. Job losses in June and July turned out to be much deeper. The economy lost a whopping 100,000 jobs in June and another 60,000 in July, according to revised figures. Previously, the government reported job losses at 51,000 in each of

those months.

So far this year, job losses totaled 605,000.

"With the unemployment rate over 6 percent, it is a clear warning sign that this economy is continuing to soften faster than we thought.

It is a real concern," said Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economic Advisors. "Businesses have decided to hunker down. They are not hiring, and they are paring workers where they can. That is making things pretty tough out there."

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Obama Blasts Job Numbers

A 10.6 percent unemployment rate for African Americans in the latest employment numbers drew a strong rebuke from Sen. Barack Obama.

"Today's jobs report is a stark reminder of what's at stake for African American families in this election," the presidential candidate said Friday. "Over the past year, African American unemployment has shot up by 2.9 percentage points — the largest one year increase in 24 years.

Obama reminded voters that his opponent John McCain has called the fundamentals of the



Sen. Barack Obama

economy 'strong.'

He said African American families are working harder and harder for less, with incomes down \$1,800 since George Bush took

office.

"John McCain's answer for the economy is more of the same: \$200 billion in tax cuts to big corporations and oil companies, and not one dime of tax relief to more than 100 million middle-class families," Obama said.

"If I am President, I will cut taxes for 95 percent of all working families and provide an immediate \$50 billion to struggling states so that they don't have to cut back on health care and education and can rebuild roads and schools. That's the change working families need right now," he said.

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