

# OJ Simpson's File

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## Committee Bulletin

- **Diego García**
- **Alejandro Argüello**

**Committee Directors**

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## **1. Welcome letters from co directors**

Hello, delegates! My name is Diego García, and for this edition of DALE, I will have the pleasure of being one of your co-directors for the O.J Simpson's File Committee. At the time of writing this, I am a 16-year-old and have just graduated from Nicaraguan Christian Academy Nejapa, but by the time of the conference, I will be just one step away from college. Debate has been part of my life since 10th grade and has considerably helped me in many ways. I've been in different debate competitions such as HACIA Democracy and DALE; these were amazing opportunities to grow as a person. Even if this is your first time in a debate competition, be confident with your arguments, and I'm sure you will have great results. Thank you for choosing this committee. I assure you that regardless of the outcome of the case, your time here will be far from boring. I also hope you'll experience the same excitement I feel when debating, whether it's your first time or not.

Hope you're doing great,

Diego García

[dagarciadelgado240708@gmail.com](mailto:dagarciadelgado240708@gmail.com)

Hello Delegates,

My name is Alejandro Arguello, and I have the pleasure of being one of your co-directors for O.J Simpson's File for this year's DALE conference. I am 17 years old and a senior at the American Nicaraguan School. I have been interested in debate throughout high school, and I'm excited to have had the opportunity to be one of the co-chairs. My experience in the debate has shown me that passion and dedication will take you very far. I think the concept of this committee is great, and I'm sure you will enjoy researching and debating the topic for this year. I'm sure everybody will do great, and just remember to try your best, be confident in what you say, and most importantly, have fun. At the end of the day, we are here to create good memories. Again, thank you for picking this committee, and see you at the conference.

Best regards,

Alejandro Argüello

[ajarguello007@gmail.com](mailto:ajarguello007@gmail.com)

## **2. Committee Introduction**

### **a. Purpose of the committee**

The OJ Simpson case remains one of the most controversial and widely publicized criminal trials in American history. Orenthal James Simpson, a former NFL star, actor, and public figure, was accused of the murders of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, in 1994. The subsequent trial, often referred to as the "Trial of the Century," captivated millions due to its high-profile nature and the complex interplay of race, celebrity, and the U.S. legal system.

This committee will examine the landmark O.J. Simpson trial, one of the most controversial and culturally significant criminal cases in American history. Delegates will explore the legal strategies used by both the prosecution and defense, the role of media in shaping public perception, and the broader implications for race, celebrity, and justice in the United States. Through structured debate, participants will analyze whether the trial upheld the principles of due process and fair trial and assess how the case continues to influence legal proceedings and societal attitudes toward the criminal justice system today.

Delegates will delve into the complexities of criminal law, evidence analysis, and moral judgment, reflecting on how the dynamics of this case transcended the courtroom and sparked national conversations about fairness and equality in the legal system. By simulating the intensity and significance of the actual trial, participants will gain valuable insights into how societal factors can impact legal outcomes.

## **b. Roles**

In this committee, delegates will work in groups, representing either the prosecution team (victims) or the defense team (O.J. Simpson). One of the committee directors will act as a judge, asking questions to guide the debate toward a conclusion. Both teams will base their arguments primarily on U.S. law. This committee is a recreation of the original trial against O.J. Simpson. Delegates are encouraged to introduce new evidence or refer to the evidence presented during the original trial to support their arguments. However, referencing the outcome of the original trial as a basis for arguments will not be considered valid.

### **i. Prosecution**

The goal of the prosecution team is to establish O.J. Simpson's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt on behalf of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman, the victims. In order to build a strong case, delegates must use forensic evidence that connects Simpson to the crime site, such as DNA tests, blood samples, and timings. They ought to draw attention to the opportunity, motive, and patterns of activity that support the guilt claim. It is essential to cross-examine defense witnesses in order to highlight inconsistencies or flaws in the other side's story. In addition, the prosecution must keep an eye on factual evidence while navigating complex sociological elements including public opinion and media influence.

### **ii. Defense**

The Defense Team will act as OJ Simpson's legal representatives, aiming to create reasonable doubt in the minds of the jury. Delegates must meticulously analyze all available evidence, including forensic data, witness testimonies, and police procedures. They are encouraged to question the credibility of key witnesses, point out inconsistencies, and challenge the integrity of evidence collection processes. Additionally, the defense must emphasize the constitutional

rights of the accused, particularly regarding due process and protection against unlawful searches and seizures. Delegates should collaborate to build a cohesive narrative that portrays Simpson as a victim of systemic bias or procedural errors.

### **3. Topic: OJ Simpson's File**

#### **a. Facts and background**

O.J. Simpson, born on July 9, 1947, was a former NFL football star, actor, and media personality. Before the events that led to the trial, Simpson had achieved immense fame and was known for his charismatic public image. However, behind closed doors, his relationship with Nicole Brown Simpson was tumultuous, marked by multiple incidents of domestic abuse. Nicole filed for divorce in 1992, citing irreconcilable differences, though domestic violence was widely speculated to be the underlying reason.

On June 12th, 1994, sometime after ten o'clock, a single male (but perhaps the perpetrator and a by-standing friend) came through the back entrance of Nicole Brown Simpson's condominium



on Bundy Drive in the prestigious Brentwood area of Los Angeles. In a small, nearly enclosed area near the front gate, the man brutally slashed Nicole, almost severing her neck from her body. Then he struggled with and repeatedly--about thirty times--stabbed Ronald

Goldman. Ronald Goldman was a twenty-five-year-old acquaintance of Nicole's, who had come to her condominium that night.

The next day, Orenthal James Simpson (O.J Simpson) is notified about the murders while on a business trip. When he gets back to LA, he is briefly arrested for interrogation. A bloody glove and footprints that matched Simpson's shoes were among the evidence discovered at the crime scene that led to O.J. Simpson's identification as a key suspect.

On June 17, 1994, Simpson was scheduled to turn himself in to the police but instead fled,



leading to one of the most iconic moments in television history. In a low-speed car chase broadcast live

across the United States, Simpson was pursued by police while riding in the backseat of his white Ford Bronco, driven by his friend Al Cowlings. Millions watched as the chase unfolded, further intensifying media interest.

Simpson was officially charged with two counts of first-degree murder on June 20, 1994, and the case was set for trial. As the pretrial period progressed, the media frenzy surrounding the case only grew, with intense public debate over Simpson's guilt or innocence.



The trial began on January 24, 1995, at the Los Angeles County Superior Court. It quickly became a media spectacle, with daily televised coverage and widespread speculation. The courtroom was packed with reporters, legal analysts, and members of the public eager to witness the unfolding drama.



The defense team, known as "The Dream Team," was led by prominent attorney Johnnie Cochran and included Robert Shapiro, Robert Kardashian, and F. Lee Bailey, among others. They built their strategy on the argument that Simpson was

a victim of systemic racism and police misconduct. The defense argued that key pieces of evidence had been contaminated or planted by the Los Angeles Police Department, pointing specifically to Detective Mark Fuhrman, who was later revealed to have made racist remarks.

The prosecution, led by Marcia Clark and Christopher Darden, emphasized Simpson's history of domestic violence against Nicole Brown Simpson and presented extensive DNA evidence. Blood samples collected from the crime scene, Simpson's vehicle, and his residence linked him to the murders. However, the complexity of DNA evidence was still relatively new to juries at the time, which the defense used to cast doubt on its reliability.

One of the most pivotal moments in the trial came when Simpson was asked to try on the blood-stained glove found at the crime scene. The glove appeared to be too small for Simpson's hand, leading Johnnie Cochran to famously declare, "If it doesn't fit, you must

acquitted." This moment had a profound impact on the jury and the public perception of the case.

After a trial lasting over eight months, the jury reached a verdict on October 3, 1995, finding Simpson not guilty of both murders. The verdict was met with starkly different



reactions across racial and social lines, reflecting deep divisions in American society regarding race and the criminal justice system.

In a separate civil trial that concluded in February 1997, Simpson was found liable for the wrongful deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. He was ordered to pay \$33.5 million in damages to the victims' families, a verdict that offered a sense of justice to some who believed he had evaded criminal punishment.

#### **b. Prosecution arguments**

The prosecution team must build a comprehensive and compelling narrative to prove Simpson's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt by meticulously presenting a chain of overwhelming evidence. Central to their argument is the timeline of events. On the night of June 12, 1994, Simpson had no verifiable alibi. Witnesses reported hearing loud noises and seeing a white Ford Bronco near the crime scene around the estimated time of the murders. Delegates should detail the timeline to highlight opportunity and motive. They should also argue that Simpson's proximity to the crime scene and his inconsistent statements point to guilt.

Physical evidence forms the backbone of the prosecution's case. DNA analysis linked Simpson to the crime scene, with blood samples from his home, vehicle, and the crime scene

showing a match. This evidence is supported by the **Federal Rules of Evidence 401**, which underscores the relevance and materiality of evidence. Delegates should emphasize the rarity of DNA coincidences, noting that the statistical likelihood of such a match occurring randomly is astronomically low. They can argue that scientific evidence is objective and not subject to the biases attributed to human witnesses.

Another pillar of the prosecution's case is Simpson's history of domestic violence. Nicole Brown Simpson had previously reported abuse, and 911 calls were presented as evidence. Under **California Penal Code 187**, which defines murder, the prosecution can argue that a pattern of abuse reflects motive. Delegates should argue that domestic violence often escalates to homicide, making the past incidents relevant. They should also stress that Nicole feared for her life, which can be framed as a predictor of the fatal outcome.

Simpson's behavior following the murders offers substantial circumstantial evidence. His failure to surrender to the police on June 17, 1994, and the subsequent car chase indicated consciousness of guilt. Delegates should argue that innocent individuals rarely attempt to evade law enforcement in such a high-profile manner. They can explore how flight behavior is often legally interpreted as evidence of guilt.

To counter the defense's claims of police misconduct, delegates should focus on the volume and consistency of the evidence. Even if some elements appear compromised, the sheer amount of incriminating material makes it unlikely that all evidence was planted. Delegates can cite the **principle of harmless error**, arguing that minor procedural flaws do not invalidate the entirety of the evidence. They can argue that the defense is overemphasizing isolated procedural mistakes to distract from overwhelming proof.

Delegates should also address the cultural impact of the case, arguing that the high-profile nature of the trial may have intensified scrutiny but does not change the facts. The

prosecution can argue that focusing on societal narratives distracts from the substantial forensic and testimonial evidence. They should maintain that justice is blind and that the case should be evaluated on facts rather than societal perceptions.

### **Possible Questions from the Judge for the Prosecution Team:**

1. How do you respond to claims that police misconduct could have compromised key evidence?
2. What is your strongest rebuttal to the defense's theory of evidence tampering?
3. How do you justify the inclusion of past domestic violence incidents without risking unfair prejudice?
4. Why should the court overlook the novelty of DNA evidence at the time and rely on it as definitive proof?
5. How do you address the defense's argument regarding systemic bias in the LAPD and its potential impact on the investigation?

### **c. Defense arguments**

The defense team must construct a multi-faceted narrative that emphasizes the existence of reasonable doubt. In any criminal trial in the United States, the standard of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt, as established in **In re Winship, 397 U.S. 358 (1970)**. Delegates should argue that the prosecution failed to eliminate reasonable doubt regarding Simpson's guilt by focusing on various aspects of the case.

One critical subject is the alleged mishandling and contamination of physical evidence. The bloody glove found at Simpson's estate is a cornerstone of this argument. Delegates can assert that inconsistencies in how the glove was handled, combined with the fact that it appeared not to fit Simpson during a courtroom demonstration, suggest evidence tampering or procedural incompetence. Delegates should also challenge the chain of custody of other forensic

evidence, questioning whether it meets the stringent standards of admissibility outlined in the **Federal Rules of Evidence 901.**

Police misconduct offers another substantial avenue for defense arguments. Detective Mark Fuhrman's recorded racist remarks raise questions about potential bias and evidence tampering. By invoking the Fourth Amendment, which protects against unlawful searches and seizures, and the Fourteenth Amendment, which ensures due process, the defense can argue that racial prejudice compromised the investigation's objectivity. Delegates should emphasize how systemic issues with law enforcement could have motivated officers to tamper with evidence or unfairly target Simpson.

Delegates should also address Simpson's history with Nicole Brown Simpson. While acknowledging past domestic incidents, they must argue that prior bad acts do not automatically prove guilt in this case. Citing the Federal Rules of Evidence 404(b), they can argue that the inclusion of past behavior unfairly biases the jury. Furthermore, they can argue that past domestic violence incidents were non-lethal and should not be conflated with homicide.

Another key argument revolves around the emerging nature of DNA evidence at the time. In 1995, DNA forensics were still relatively novel, leaving room for doubt about laboratory errors, contamination, and the reliability of testing procedures. Delegates can emphasize these vulnerabilities to challenge the credibility of the prosecution's evidence. They can explore inconsistencies in how the evidence was collected, stored, and tested, arguing that any compromise in the chain of custody undermines its reliability.

Finally, the defense can explore the theory that Simpson was framed by law enforcement, leveraging skepticism toward the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) due to historical tensions with minority communities. This argument taps into systemic distrust and can

resonate with broader societal concerns. Delegates should explore how similar cases of police misconduct have led to wrongful convictions, arguing that systemic racism may have played a significant role.

### **Possible Questions from the Judge for the Defense Team:**

1. How do you address the fact that Simpson had no verifiable alibi at the time of the murders?
2. Why would law enforcement risk planting evidence in such a high-profile case?
3. Can you provide concrete evidence of procedural errors that directly undermine the reliability of the DNA results?
4. How do you separate past instances of domestic violence from the current case without ignoring potential patterns of behavior?
5. What alternative theories of the crime can you propose to explain the forensic evidence found at the scene?

#### **d. Key subtopics**

**Media Influence:** Media coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial was pervasive and sensationalized, with networks broadcasting the trial live for months. Delegates should explore how this unprecedented level of media scrutiny may have influenced jury members, witnesses, and public opinion. The defense could argue that this created a biased environment, while the prosecution might contend it provided necessary transparency.

**Race and the Justice System:** The trial took place in the aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, reflecting deep racial divisions. Delegates should examine how racial dynamics affected jury selection and public sentiment. The defense can argue systemic racism within the LAPD led to evidence tampering, while the prosecution may assert that race was used to distract from the facts.

**Celebrity and Privilege:** O.J. Simpson's fame and wealth allowed him to assemble a high-profile defense team, including Johnnie Cochran and Robert Shapiro. Delegates should discuss whether this created an imbalance in justice. The prosecution could argue this set a precedent for unequal treatment, while the defense might contend that resources ensured a fair trial.

**Role of Expert Witnesses:** Forensic experts played a crucial role, particularly in interpreting DNA evidence. Delegates should analyze whether conflicting expert testimonies confused the jury or revealed genuine flaws in evidence handling. The defense can argue that inconsistent results show reasonable doubt, while the prosecution can claim that expert consensus confirmed guilt.

**Impact on Victim Advocacy:** The murder of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman highlighted issues of domestic violence. Delegates should debate how this case influenced public policy and advocacy for victims. The prosecution can argue that prior abuse demonstrated motive, while the defense may assert that focusing on past incidents unfairly prejudiced the jury.

**Influence of Public Opinion:** Public reactions were split along racial lines, with polls showing differing opinions on the verdict. Delegates can discuss how societal attitudes toward race, fame, and the justice system shaped perceptions of the trial. The defense might argue public support reflected skepticism of law enforcement, while the prosecution could claim it diverted attention from factual evidence.

#### 4. Preparation

##### Where do I find information?

- **Official Case Records:** Reviewing trial transcripts, court documents, and witness testimonies from the original O.J. Simpson trial.
- **United States Legal Frameworks:** Studying the Federal Rules of Evidence, the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments, and California Penal Code 187.
- **Evidence and Forensic Reports:** Examining DNA evidence, autopsy reports, and expert analyses used in the trial.

##### How to prepare effectively?

**Explore Case Law Related to the Trial:** Research precedents that influenced the legal strategies used during the trial, particularly focusing on the application of the Federal Rules of Evidence, the Fourth Amendment, and the Fourteenth Amendment.

Investigate how these laws were interpreted and applied in similar high-profile criminal cases.

**Review Official Case Records:** Analyze trial transcripts, court documents, and witness testimonies from the original O.J. Simpson trial. Examine the autopsy reports, DNA evidence, and forensic analyses that were pivotal to the case.

**Watch Documentaries and Hearings:** Viewing documentaries such as *O.J.: Made in America* and *The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story* can provide essential context. Listen to audio recordings of 911 calls and courtroom proceedings to gain insight into the emotional and societal impact of the case.



**Examine Evidence Thoroughly:** Review physical evidence such as the bloody glove, DNA samples, and the white Ford Bronco. Understand the controversies surrounding the chain of custody and how these issues affect the credibility of evidence.

**Consider Broader Societal Contexts:** Investigate how race, celebrity status, and media coverage influenced public perception and potentially the trial's outcome. Assess how these societal factors may impact legal proceedings and the pursuit of justice.

## **5. Parliamentary Procedure**

**Committee Rounds** A full session of the committee will consist of a series of rounds, each consisting of a period of formal argument and a period of informal deliberation. Rounds shall run simultaneously. One of the Co Chairs shall moderate a separate round acting as a Judge; the other Co--Chair will keep official time of all proceedings.

**Members:** All delegation members shall attend every session of their respective committees unless excused by a Co--Chair from their committee. Delegates will serve as defense or prosecution. These roles shall be assigned by the Co-Chairs before the conference.

**Quorum:** The presence of 2/3 of delegates representing both parties to the case shall be required to commence formal arguments.

**Introductory Procedure:** Before beginning each round, each Co-Chair may make a brief opening statement. Once a quorum has been established, the Co-Chair will begin the round.

**Preparation Time:** The Co--Chair shall announce the amount of preparation time available to each team. Depending on the preferences of the delegates, some or all of that time allotment may be used before the opening arguments or before the final arguments. Each team shall be accorded an equal amount of time. (30 min. for each side)

**Opening Arguments:** Agents from each side shall be granted fifteen uninterrupted minutes with which to present their opening arguments. The Prosecution shall speak first. Each member of the team should speak. (15 min. for each side)

**Judicial Query:** The Chair #1 will moderate a questioning round, during which the judge (The Chair #2) will present their questions for 45 minutes.

- During questions to both sides—2 min. for each side to prepare, 4 min. for each to answer.
- During questions to one side—2 min. for side to prepare, 4 min. for side to answer, 4 min. for opposing side to rebut, 2 min. for previous side to rebut the rebuttal.

Every delegate has the right to write down questions on a sheet of paper and submit them for consideration to be asked to the entire audience, the prosecution, or the defense. The judge has the right to either ask these questions or refrain from doing so.

**Final Arguments:** Agents from each side shall be allotted ten minutes with which to present any final argument. The Defense team shall speak first. (10 min. for each side)

**Judicial Deliberation:** After the completion of formal arguments, agents will leave the room. The Co- Chairs shall begin informal deliberation. The entire committee shall not reconvene until the Co Chairs have reached their decision.

**Announcement of the Decision:** The Co-Chairs will moderate an informal discussion expressing their decision with the outcome of the case.

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