

Cochran to jurors: 'Do the right thing'

President concerned about trial's racial implications

LOS ANGELES — In a thundering summation that rocked the court, Johnnie Cochran Jr. exhorted O.J. Simpson's mostly black jury Thursday to "do the right thing" and acquit Simpson as a message against racism and police misconduct.

At the end of Cochran's passionate, final presentation to jurors, the judge said prosecutor Marcia Clark would conclude her rebuttal Friday, clearing the way for the case to be placed in their hands in the afternoon.

In the fevered style of a revival preacher, Cochran invoked biblical texts, referred to two key detectives as "the twin devils of deception" and told the spellbound jurors that fate had given them a chance to change history.

"Maybe there is a reason why we're here," he said. "Maybe you're the

right people at the right time at the right place to say: 'No more!'"

"Stop this cover-up! Stop this cover-up!" Cochran bellowed. "You are the consciences of this community."

Far from Los Angeles, President Clinton said he was uneasy about the racial implications of the trial.

"I'm concerned about it, and I hope the American people will not let this become some symbol of the larger racial issue in our country," he told NBC-TV in Washington.

In his final words to the jury, Cochran implored jurors acquit Simpson, as he stood before a wall-size blowup of Simpson and his small daughter, Sydney, and spoke of a father's love.

"Someone has taken these children's mother," he said. "I hope your decision doesn't take their father."

Cochran's impassioned appeal was followed by the cooler, scientific

analysis of defense attorney Barry Scheck, who told jurors: "There is a cancer at the heart of this case."

Scheck insisted they could not trust any of the DNA analysis of blood because the samples were contaminated and tampered within the "black hole" of the Los Angeles Police Department crime lab.

"Somebody played with this evidence," he said. "There's no doubt about it."

Cochran's emotion-packed discourse — often focused on Detective Mark Fuhrman — clearly was designed to rouse feelings of racial solidarity among the nine black members of the 12-person jury. The jury sat mesmerized through Cochran's arguments.

"A racist is someone who has power over you," he told them. "This man would lie and set you up because of the hatred he has in his heart."

Comparing Fuhrman to Adolf Hitler and stressing the images of

genocide, Cochran said the former detective targeted Simpson after learning in the 1980s that the black football star was married to a white woman.

During Cochran's summation, Goldman's father, Fred, sat tapping his foot in agitation. At the break, he went before TV cameras and lashed out at Cochran.

"This man is sick," he said. "This man is a horror walking around amongst us."

"We have seen a man who perhaps is the worst kind of racist himself," Goldman told reporters, "someone who shoves racism in front of everything, someone who compares someone who speaks racist comments to Hitler, a person who murdered millions of people. This man is the worst kind of human being imaginable."

Those comments spurred the normally silent Simpson family to respond on camera with their own news conference.

"We have waited all this time, and now ... the attorneys are telling my brother's story. And it's very shocking that once Johnnie gets up and starts telling what we feel happened that this has rocked somebody's world," Simpson's sister Carmelita Durio said.

In court, the panelists began to take notes during Scheck's methodical recounting of the flaws in physical evidence. He said it was clear that a pair of socks found in Simpson's bedroom had been soaked in blood after they were found — not before. And he showed evidence pointing to the planting of blood on a back gate of Ms. Simpson's condominium.

Scheck suggested that Ms. Simpson's dog, Kato, may have played a larger role in the investigation than suspected. The dog's wail has been credited by the prosecution as sounding the alert that led to the bodies.

News in a Minute



Student slain studying prostitutes

PONTIAC, Mich. — A student who descended into the underworld of prostitution for a research project was found slain, and a drifter she had met through an escort service was charged Thursday with her murder.

The Oakland Press of Pontiac quoted unidentified detectives as saying that the victim, Tina Biggar, the 23-year-old daughter of a Coast Guard commander, had been working as a prostitute.

At his arraignment, Kenneth Tranchida, 42, declared, "I'm guilty." But no plea was entered, and Judge Stephen Cooper urged him to speak to a lawyer. Tranchida, who was arrested Monday, was jailed without bail.

Biggar, an undergraduate psychology student at Oakland University, was working on a research project on prostitutes and AIDS, funded by the government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Reynolds gets five-year sentence

CHICAGO — Rep. Mel Reynolds, his promising political career ruined by his conviction for having sex with a teen-age campaign worker, was sentenced Thursday to five years in prison by a judge who told him bluntly, "You blew it."

"I think of all those things you could have done for education, for those kids ... who will join gangs because you weren't there to help," Judge Fred G. Suria told the 43-year-old lawmaker. "... You threw it away."

Before the sentencing, Reynolds accused the prosecution and media of racism.

"When they shackle me, like they shackled my slave ancestors and take me off to jail, nobody in this room will see me crawl," the black congressman said.

Suria sentenced Reynolds to the mandatory minimum four years in prison for criminal sexual assault, a concurrent four year term for child pornography and one year for obstruction of justice.

Court delays cutting down old tree

ALBANY, Ga. — A 300-year-old oak tree threatened by a road-widening project will remain standing in the middle of a busy intersection, after the Georgia Supreme Court granted it a temporary reprieve Thursday.

The high court ordered a delay in cutting down the tree to give justices time to rule on an appeal by tree supporters, whose efforts to save the tree were rejected by a lower court judge.

Arafat, Rabin sign milestone accord

WASHINGTON — In another milestone toward peace, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chief Yasser Arafat signed an agreement Thursday ending Israel's military occupation of West Bank cities and laying the foundation for a Palestinian state.

"We want you as good neighbors," the gravelly-voiced Rabin told Arafat, his onetime blood enemy.

"Enough killing and enough killing of innocent people," Arafat declared to loud applause.

President Clinton presided over two hours of speeches and pageantry before an audience of 200 diplomats, foreign ministers, Cabinet secretaries and members of Congress. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein joined Clinton as witnesses to the accord.

"Chapter by chapter, Jews and Arabs are writing a new history for their ancient lands," Clinton said. Arafat and Rabin both called on Syria and Lebanon to drop their reluctance to join the peace process.

To worldwide acclaim, Arafat and Rabin signed a tortuously negotiated agreement for Israel to relinquish control of territory it captured from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War.

The agreement outlines in painstaking detail the step-by-step with-

"This means that by the beginning, middle or end of December, all populated areas in the West Bank ... will be free of Israeli soldiers."

YASSER ARAFAT

PLO chief

drawal of Israeli forces and the transfer of governing authority for Palestinian self-rule in 30 percent of the West Bank, containing most of its Arab population. The accord also allows for Palestinian elections.

Arafat, addressing a group of business leaders investing in Palestine, said Thursday night that the Israeli pullout would begin within 10 days and require about two months to complete.

"This means that by the beginning, middle or end of December, all populated areas in the West Bank — cities, towns, villages, hamlets and refugee camps — will be free of Israeli soldiers," he said.

The accord also calls for the release of 5,000 Palestinian prisoners by Israel. The first group was to have been released Thursday, but Arafat, offering no reason for the delay, said it will occur Sunday. He said the

second group would be released before the election and the third group after it.

The document was a follow-up to the 1993 White House agreement that brought Rabin and Arafat together for a historic handshake of peace.

"Please, take a good, hard look," Rabin told the hushed audience. "The sight you see before you at this moment was impossible, was unthinkable just three years ago."

But Rabin also warned that peace could crumble unless both sides unite against terrorists who are trying to prevent peace. "Don't let it happen," he implored.

"If all the partners to the peace-making do not unite against the evil angels of death by terrorism, all that will remain of this ceremony are color snapshots, empty mementos," Rabin said.

U.S. servicemen formally charged with rape

TOKYO — Three U.S. servicemen were charged Friday with abducting and raping a 12-year-old girl, clearing the way for their delivery to Japanese authorities as protesters nationwide have vehemently demanded.

The rape has caused a major uproar on Okinawa, one of the United States' most important military outposts in the Pacific, and generated a nationwide debate over whether Japan should revise the terms under which 45,000 U.S. troops are stationed.

Charged Friday were Marine Pfc. Rodrico Harp, 21, of Griffin, Ga.; Pfc. Kendrick M. Ledet, 20, of Waycross, Ga.; and Navy Seaman Marcus D. Gill, 22, of Woodville, Texas.

The charges were filed Friday

morning at the Naha District Court, court spokesman Hidekatsu Shinjo said. Marine spokesmen had no immediate comment but have promised to cooperate fully with the Japanese authorities.

Authorities believe the three abducted the girl Sept. 4 near her home, threw her into the back of a rented van and bound her with electrical tape. They drove her to a beach, where they raped her, police say.

Local police sought custody of the three shortly after the rape was reported, but their request was denied by the U.S. Marines, who cited a bilateral agreement that gives U.S. forces custody over personnel suspected in crimes until formal charges are filed.

Hoping to soothe Okinawan an-

ger, U.S. Ambassador Walter Mondale, Defense Secretary William Perry and President Clinton have offered apologies and vowed to prevent more such violence.

Marine Maj. Gen. Wayne Rollings, the top commander on Okinawa, has declared next Wednesday a "day of reflection" and said routine training would be replaced by a full day of discussions on the military's standards of conduct and host nation sensitivities.

Both Tokyo and Washington have stressed that they do not want the current storm to affect their overall security ties. Both sides fear a review of the pact, particularly at a time when public emotions are high, could open up a Pandora's Box of potentially divisive issues.

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