

Your Heads in Shame

Anonymous Man Juror in Simi Valley trial

(A house in Simi Valley. Fall. Halloween decorations are up. Dusk. Low lamplight. A slender, soft-spoken man in glasses. His young daughter and wife greeted me as well. Quietness.)

As soon as we went
into the courtroom with the verdicts
there were
plainclothes policemen everywhere.
You know, I knew that
there would be people unhappy with the verdict,
but I didn't expect near
what happened.
If I had known
what was going to happen,
I mean, it's not,
it's not fair to say I would have voted a different
way.
I wouldn't have—
that's not our justice system—
but I would have written a note to the judge saying,
"I can't do this,"
because of
what it put my family through.
Excuse me.
(Crying)
So anyway,

we started going out to the bus
and the police said
right away,
“If there’s rocks and bottles, don’t worry
the glass on the bus is bulletproof.”
And then I noticed a huge mob scene,
and it’s a sheriff’s bus that they lock prisoners in.
We got to the hotel and there were some obnoxious
reporters out
there
already, trying to get interviews.
And, you know, the police were trying to get us into the bus
and cover
our faces,
and,
and this reporter said,
“Why are you hiding your heads in shame? Do you know
that buildings
are burning
and people are dying in South LA
because of you?”
And twenty minutes later I got home
and the same obnoxious reporter was at the door
and my wife was saying, “He doesn’t want to talk to
anybody,”
and she kept saying,
“The people wanna know,
the people wanna know,”
and trying to get her foot in the door.
And I said, “Listen, I don’t wanna talk to anybody. My wife
has made

that clear.”

And I,

you know, slammed the door in her face.

And so she pulled two houses down

and started

filming our house.

And watching on the TV

and seeing all the political leaders,

Mayor Bradley

and President Bush,

condemning our verdicts.

I mean, the jurors as a group, we tossed around:

was this a setup of some sort?

We just feel like we were pawns that were thrown away by

the

system.

I mean,

the judge,

most of the jurors

feel like when he was reading the verdicts

he . . .

we thought we could sense a look of disdain on his face,

and he also had said

beforehand

that after the verdicts came out

he would like to come up and talk to us,

but after we gave the verdicts

he sent someone up and said he didn't really want to

do that then.

And plus, he had the right and power to

withhold our names for a period of time

and he did not do that,
he released them right away.
I think it was apparent that we would be harassed
and I got quite a few threats.
I got threatening letters and threatening phone calls.
I think he just wanted to separate himself . . .
A lot of newspapers published our addresses too.
The New York *Times* published the values of our homes.
They were released in papers all across the country.
We didn't answer the phone,
because it was just every three minutes . . .
We've been portrayed as white racists.
One of the most disturbing things, and a lot of the jurors
said that
the thing that bothered them that they received in the mail
more
than anything else,
more than the threats, was a letter from the KKK
saying,
"We support you, and if you need our help, if you want to
 join
our organization,
we'd welcome you into our fold."
And we all just were:
No, oh!
God!